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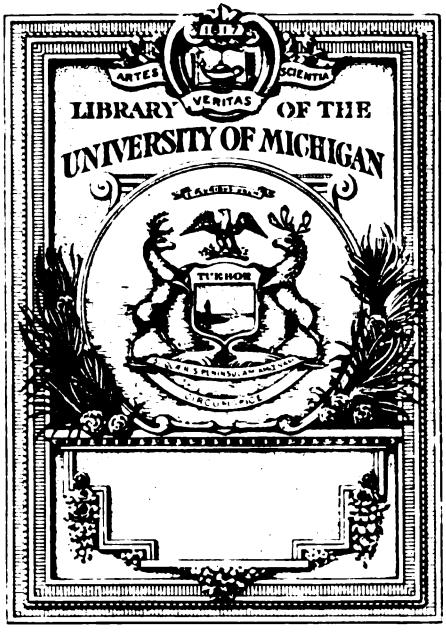
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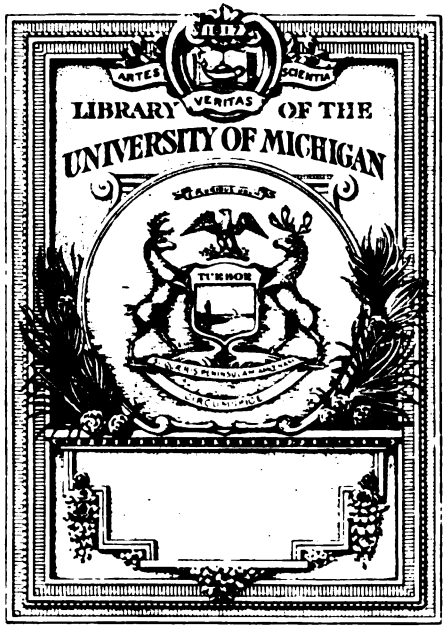
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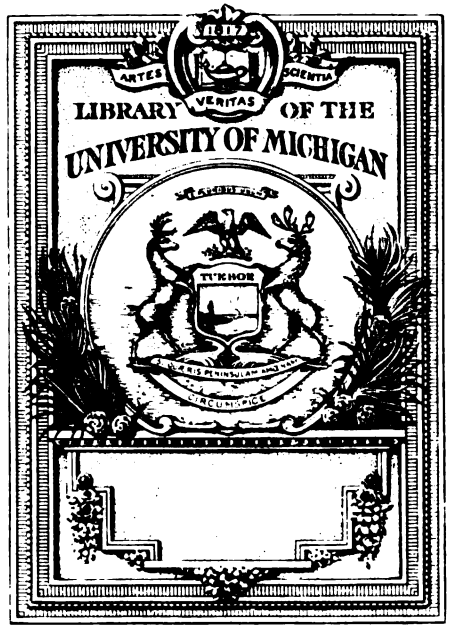
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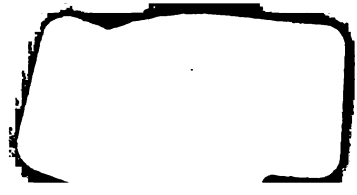

# THE STORY OF MY LIFE

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GAPON IN LONDON, 1905.
(*Photo: N. Luboshez.*)

[*Frontispiece.*

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## CHAPTER I

### THE STRICKEN GIANT: AN ALLEGORY

I HAD a dream. A pack of ravenous hounds, of various breeds and sizes, was mercilessly attacking a giant form that lay prone and insensible in the mud, while their keeper stood by, eagerly watching and directing the attack. The hounds were burying their teeth in the giant's flesh. His miserable garb was torn to shreds. Every moment they beset him more closely. They were already beginning to lick his warm blood. A flight of crows circled above, hovering lower and lower toward the expected prey.

And now a wonderful thing happened. From the drops of blood trickling from the great frame of the giant, on which the warm sunlight played, I saw strong-winged eagles and keen-eyed falcons spring up and soar into the air, and these birds at once sought to protect the giant, to arouse him by their cries to resistance, and to encourage

him to rise with all his strength against his enemies.

For a long time the giant lay in a stupor. At length he uttered a groan, half opened his eyes, listening, not yet quite awake, not realizing what was going on, and annoyed by the shrieks of the birds that would not let him sleep longer and that were engaged in a deadly fight with the dogs and crows. It was a bloody, merciless, and unequal struggle. The giant still could not fully realize which were his friends and which his enemies.

At length he became fully conscious, stretched his limbs, and stood erect in the immensity of his stature. Then, empty-handed and in rags as he was, he turned upon the pack of bloodhounds and their cruel keeper.

The keeper uttered a shrill whistle, and in answer a new figure appeared upon the scene. A soldier, well armed and drilled to obey such a command, fired at the giant's broad and defenceless figure. At a further command he rushed forward with his bayonet. The giant, grievously hurt, staggered, but seized the weapon with his powerful hand and flung it far away. The next moment, however, looking at his assailant, his lips quivered, his gaze became dim. Overpowered for a moment by grief, he covered his face with his hand, and stood, the very picture of anguish.

In the soldier he had recognized his own son, flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, deceived, fooled, and now hypnotized into parricide.

The pause was not a long one. The giant remembered that he had another son, a humble but faithful tiller of the soil. He would not abuse his father. No; but where was he? Why did he not come to the rescue?

The giant looked round and saw in the distance his other child, a burly, powerful, good-natured figure, handsome in his simplicity, but fettered and chained to the plough, dirty and ragged like his father, working as a slave for the benefit of others, his eyes blindfolded, his noble frame underfed. He could not help—not yet.

And the giant's lips quivered once more; hot tears, shining like diamonds, rolled down the large, pathetic face.

I looked at that face, at the frame of the giant—a frame that spoke at once of immense power and of helplessness, of beauty buried under a layer of dirt, limbs that might do great things, but were unnerved by shameful treatment and neglect. I looked at the pool of crimson blood at his feet, and the hungry pack standing around, showing their sharp, white teeth. I looked at the cowardly keeper; and, as I saw all this, my heart bled.

For in the giant I recognized my own country, my dearly-loved country, and its people.

And the pang of an intolerable outrage crept slowly, like a cold serpent, to my soul, and wound itself round it and tightened its steel coils till I could bear it no longer—and I awoke.

* * * * *

Alas! It was but a momentary relief! My dream was no mere nightmare; it was only too true to reality. Indeed, has not my country, the land of majestic rivers, of unbroken, dreamy forests, of verdant plains, as fair in spring as the smile of a child, and as vast as the soul of its people, of immense wealth and boundless possibilities—has not this land been plundered for centuries by the greedy pack of officials, great and small? Has not my people, the people of Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, of Verestchagin and Antokolsky, of great scientists and philosophers, and idealists who have known how to sacrifice everything for the weal of humanity or for an idea—has it not been abused, ill-treated, humiliated by selfish and cruel rulers? Has not my nation—a nation that could give birth to so rich a language and develop so humane a national character—been deprived of light by an ignorant and greedy clergy, as the sun is hidden by a flight of crows? Have not its own sons been turned lately against it to shoot down by the thousand unarmed men, women, and children,

who, in their *naïve* trust in the goodwill of the Tsar, went to implore him to come to their aid?

Yes, all this was true—all this was reality itself. But my awakening showed me that that was not the full truth.

There was another side to this picture. The St. Petersburg strike and the events of January last have been a flash of lightning that has rent the darkness of Russian life. The long misery of the Russian nation has not been in vain. It had accumulated, as it were, a store of electric force in the moral atmosphere of the nation, so that, when the St. Petersburg strike came about, only a flash was needed to ignite the mass of inflammable material. And, just as after a thunderstorm there comes rain which revives the earth, so the horrible events of which I shall speak have had a beneficial effect. Blood has been spilt, and this lamentable blood has fallen like warm rain upon the frozen soil of Russian life.

Providence has put me as a necessary instrument in the midst of these events. But, to make such an instrument, certain characteristics and certain experiences were necessary; and how I came to have these characteristics and experiences I can best explain by reference to my youthful life. I am but one of many. It might have been another, as easily as myself, who appeared at the necessary

point in this critical moment; but, since it has happened to be me and no other personality, it is natural that people should feel interested; and this is the reason why I have agreed to tell my story.

GAPON'S BIRTHPLACE: HIS FATHER AND YOUNGEST BROTHER IN THE GATEWAY.

[*To face p.* 7.

## CHAPTER II

### MY EARLY HOME

Let me, at the outset, recall some characteristics of my father and mother, to whom I owe so much. Ours was a humble peasant family, living in the large village of Biliki, in the province of Poltava, South Russia. My father is now about seventy years old, my mother about sixty. All the education my father has he got from a village sexton, a man whose knowledge and ideas were very primitive indeed. My father has, however, an immense amount of knowledge of everything concerned with peasant life, and a simple and concrete way of looking at things. He is a man not only of exceptional but of pedantic honesty. Extremely even in his temper, and, unlike his brothers, friendly and hearty towards every one, he always seemed unable to kill a fly. He is honoured and beloved by the whole locality, and—an unusual thing in Ukrainian life—is hardly ever mentioned by his surname, but is always alluded to as Appollon Feodorovitch, the use of the patronymic among

peasants marking particular deference, while the dropping of the surname marks an affectionate familiarity.

For thirty-five consecutive years he was elected either as elder or clerk of the *Volost* (group of communes), the latter appointment being the more significant; as the fact that the clerk writes and holds all the documents and accounts, while the elder is often illiterate, makes the position of the former the more influential. They are relatively lucrative positions, both officials often receiving presents from the peasantry in money or in kind; but my father always refused such gifts, and after a generation in office remained rather poorer than before. He loved the soil; and, what is rather unusual among the peasantry, he never whipped his children. From his kindly talk I learned much of the iniquities perpetrated by officials on the labouring people, and much of how every inch of the Ukraïnian soil, which had since been given to idlers by the Government, was in past times wet with the heroic blood of those Cossacks who fought for the liberty and welfare of the people, and stood as defenders of Western Christianity against the Turks and Tartars in the East.

Sometimes, while we were all sitting on the *prisba* (an earthen bench running round the wall of the cottage), some grand landlord would pass

by in his coach. My father would laughingly point to him and say, "Look how proud he looks; and yet his coach and all he has comes from our labour."

And I, less amiable, would furtively throw a stone after the cavalcade.

From my father, too, I learned how humiliating is the position of the village delegates to the *Zemstvo* (local council) under the existing Government. Practically they have no voice in settling its business, because if they made themselves inconvenient, a plausible pretext would easily be found for giving them seven days in the *Volost* gaol. I remember, when I was twelve or thirteen years old, I had to go one day to the office of the *Volost* to see my father. I found him sitting in a little harbour in the garden of the *Volost* office in company with the elder and his assistant. I remember that these were elected representatives of a population of ten thousand souls. They were talking of the difference between the old times and the new.

"In the olden times," one of them was saying, "the power of the Government officers was such that, in order to show that they could do anything they liked with the representatives of the peasantry, they would call the elder before them, and compel him to go down on all fours and bark like a dog before all the villagers." While my

father's friend was saying this and congratulating himself that things were now so different, a harness-bell was heard, and, imagining that an official visitor was about to catch them, the elder and his assistant seemed suddenly stricken with fear. The elder, a corpulent fellow, waddled away to the office, and his assistant followed, sneaking behind the bushes. With an air of innocence I asked my father why he did not go also. The old man replied with a twinkle of the eyes and his usual kindly smile.

I remember, on another occasion, hearing from my father that a peasant in our village had been publicly birched. All Russians consider this punishment so humiliating and inhuman that they do not ask what pretext exists before condemning it; and young peasants have been known to commit suicide rather than submit to it. To me, who had never been flogged, even at home, the news was peculiarly horrifying; and, although my father assured me that elective officials were exempt from this punishment, I lay awake tortured by the idea that he might some day be stripped and chastised.

You see, he had always treated me as a friend, notwithstanding the difference of age, and never with the severity or even condescension of a senior. That is one reason why, through the lengthening years of labour and sorrow, I have

GAPON'S FATHER, MOTHER, AND YOUNGEST BROTHER.

[*To face p.* 11.

always cherished my memories of him. How is it with him now? Perhaps—it is only too likely—the Russian police are troubling him, perhaps he is suffering in other ways on my account. As I think of him, thousands of miles away amid the woods and meadows of my childhood's home, I see the old man again, with weakening gait and dim eyes; I recall his hope that I, his eldest son, should some day be his staff and support—that, as he put it, "you will bury my body;" and, as the vision passes before my mind's eye, I am not ashamed to confess to feeling an overwhelming emotion.

Such was my father's influence. It is to my mother, in the first place, that I owe the direction of my religious life. She was herself illiterate; but her father, who lived near us, could read, and, being an extremely devout man, spent a good deal of time in reading the lives of the saints. My grandfather often repeated these stories to me, and they so worked upon my imagination that, being then only seven or eight years old, I would stand for hours before the holy images, praying and shedding tears over my supposed sins.

Some of these tales had a rather different effect. I remember how much I was struck by the story of one St. John, originally Bishop of Novgorod, of whom it was narrated that once, while he was fervently praying, the Evil One played all manner

of tricks to divert him from his devotions. At last the devil got into the water-jug that stood in the corner of the cell, whereupon the holy man quickly made the sign of the cross over it and so imprisoned his infernal enemy. The devil begged to be released, promising to do anything that was demanded of him. The bishop asked to be at once taken to Jerusalem; and that night they journeyed there and back, after which the devil was released. This greatly impressed me, and I shed innocent tears; but I could not, at the same time, help wishing that I could catch the devil to such good purpose.

Withal the fantastic forms in which the religious spirit manifested itself to me, it had a hold both sincere and strong. I was deeply impressed by the holiness of all these saints and anchorites, and dreamed of a day when I should become one of them. My mother worked the more earnestly upon such feelings because she believed that her own salvation from the fires of hell depended upon her first saving us little ones. So, however hungry I might be when I came home, I would not touch food without permission, because, though there was no one in the room, up in the corner there stood the holy image of Christ, whose eyes seemed to follow one from place to place. I would never take a mouthful of milk on Friday lest a horn should spring out of

my forehead. My mother was a masterful woman. However cold the weather and scanty our clothing, we must go to church, and, in our corner of the aisle, we must sing, even if our teeth were chattering in our heads.

But as time went on I began to revolt against the maternal despotism. One day, when the floods were out, I intentionally fell into the water so as to evade the duty of going to church. No doubt my mother's religion was sincere, but I noticed that even her being engaged in family prayers did not prevent her from watching everything that was going on out of the corner of her eye; if, for instance, one of the pigs got into the vegetable garden, she would jump up from her devotions and rush after it. Sometimes she would get hold of the biography of one of the saints, and, since I alone could read it, I was imprisoned through the sunny hours reading aloud from the precious and sacred book. Once I forgot that it was Friday, and was caught in the shed illicitly devouring bread and milk; but, after my mother had satisfied herself by the administration of summary justice, the contrast between the forms of religion and its essence forced itself more urgently upon my boyish mind. No doubt the church choir sang energetically and effectively, and no doubt that was necessary to salvation—and yet, and yet, they could not help filling up

the intervals with jests and chatter. Did the great God really wish that I should be whipped?

I knew that my mother was really kind-hearted. Though only a poor peasant woman, she would often give away to others who were yet poorer—and in our district there were many who not only had no land of their own, but who had to depend upon their neighbours for food and shelter—more than our little store could afford. She seemed to me to be a good soul struggling like a captured bird in the mesh of religious formalism.

These opposite influences of my father and mother were blended, and assumed a poetical quality from my impressions of the natural surroundings which gave Ukraïna the name of "the Italy of Russia." In the long autumn evenings, when we children had been sent to bed, and were lying on the floor in a row under one home-made felt coverlet, the women of the family would sit spinning, and at the same time singing or telling stories. My mother knew many folk-songs, and sang them well; and I often lay awake listening to the sad, exquisite melody and the simple words describing the fate of a girl left behind when her Cossack lover went to the wars, or the historical exploits of some national hero of the olden time, or the traditional story of my ancestor, Gapon-Bydak. The village of Biliki lies on both banks of the historic river Vorskla, and is known as

the place of many battles with the Tartars in the far-away days when the expansion of Russia to the south and east was only just beginning. The hills around it were capped with woods of poplar and oak and other trees; and, after I had been listening to some tale of Cossack exploits, it seemed to my boyish imagination that the woods were still full of the clamour of contending hosts. These romantic ideas were aided by the beauty of the deep blue vault of the South Russian sky and its brilliant incrustation of stars.

# CHAPTER III

## I BECOME A PRIEST

TURNING to the prosaic side of our every-day life, I see myself again a lad, barefooted and often capless, in peasant dress, making myself, or rather being made, useful by my hard-working family, as guardian of a few sheep or pigs, and occasionally being entrusted with a whole herd of cattle on pasture. I was particularly fond of my flock of geese, not only because it was good to watch the growth of the little yellow goslings into white-feathered birds, but because I was proud of training a gander which would beat any in the village.

From my seventh year I attended the primary school, and made such progress that the clergy told my parents that I ought to continue my studies. But how, and for what end? What career should be chosen for me? Two motives decided this question. The first is expressed in the Ukraïnian proverb: "A priest is a golden sheaf;" the second was that, if I should become

a priest, I should not only myself get easy access to Heaven, but I should be able to help all my people thither.

So it was decided to send me to the lower Ecclesiastical School in Poltava. This meant a four years' course of studies after the preliminary year was concluded. But, as I did well in the preliminary examinations, I was allowed to begin at the second year's classes. I was then twelve years old. At first I felt myself altogether an outsider. In my peasant dress, with my peasant manners, all the other students, who were sons of priests or deacons, looked down on me as a social inferior. They showed their pride in the usual boyish fashion, and at first I was too timid to reply in kind. Indeed, as I made rapid progress, their jealousy became more marked. At last I had an occasion to repay them in their own coin and so established a tolerable position, though throughout these years I was to some extent isolated.

When I was fifteen years old, and in my last year at the school, one of the tutors named Treguboff * put into my hands some of Tolstoy's

* Mr. Treguboff was in later years one of the three signatories of the appeal for the Dukhobors, the others being Tolstoy and Mr. Vladimir Tchertkoff, and he was then first exiled and afterwards allowed to leave Russia for ever. Mr. Vladimir Tchertkoff, who was also banished, settled in England and established the *Free Age Press* for the publication of Tolstoyan literature.

writings, which had a lasting effect upon my mind. For the first time I saw clearly that the essence of religion lay, not in its outward forms, but in its inner spirit—not in any ceremonies, but in love for one's neighbour. I took every opportunity of expressing these new ideas, especially in our village during my holidays.

But I fear I showed my unruly spirit in less serious ways than that of theological discussion. It happened that the courtyard of the school was only divided from the bishop's garden by a board fence. More than once a band of us students made a hole in the fence, and raided the episcopal garden in the small hours when the household was deep in sleep. Sometimes we were caught by the gardeners, and we had to fight our way back; but we always contrived to get off unidentified. I look back at this period of my youth with little satisfaction. But soon I stood face to face with the serious facts of life. The death of my youngest sister marked the point between boyhood and manhood. I was sixteen and she was only ten, but the little girl, with her sunny hair, was my favourite, and I had played with her in the fields for hours together.

I now passed on to the Ecclesiastical Seminary, and while there, partly through the influence of another Tolstoyan, one Feyerman, I could not help becoming a still more outspoken critic of the

falsity I saw around me; so that at last one of the local clergy denounced me to the seminary authorities, and at the same time one of the tutors reported that I was demoralizing the school by sowing seeds of heresy. The result was a threat that the stipend which the Government allows to the most successful of the theological students would be withdrawn. I replied that henceforth I should not accept this stipend. That meant having to support myself and pay the fees as well. This I did by giving lessons in some of the wealthier families of the neighbourhood and teaching the children of the clergy. Sometimes I had to spend the vacation with my pupils, and during these visits I had opportunities of seeing the inner side of the life of Russian priests. I saw them celebrate the Eucharist in a state of intoxication, and many other things convinced me that there was much Pharisaism among them. Not only did they not sacrifice their own comfort for the weal of the people, but they were often positive leeches, and this although a hundred opportunities called to them every day. All around me I saw misery, overwork, poverty, and sickness. In a territory of twenty miles' radius there was but one physician; and our large village had to manage with a single junior medical assistant. On the other hand, I saw more and more clearly the contrast between the Gospel

itself and the forms and doctrines of the Church, the ignorance and hypocrisy of the clergy. And as I pondered these things my mind was filled with an overwhelming disgust. A year passed in this state of agitation, to which I owed it that an attack of typhoid was followed by brain fever. For a long time I lay sick, and when my father came to the hospital he did not at first recognize me.

As health began gradually to return, I concluded that I was unfit for the priesthood. I therefore attended the lectures at the seminary less regularly, spending most of my time in teaching, meeting the outcasts and other humble labouring folk of the district, doing what little I could to help them, and hearing their life-stories. The authorities of the seminary did not seek to interfere with this independent life; but, as it turned out, they were preparing to punish me. When, on the conclusion of the seminary course, the question arose of my going on to the Ecclesiastical Academy, I replied that I preferred to go to a University to conclude my studies. On leaving, however, I found that my behaviour was so badly attested in my certificate that no University would admit me. That is one way they have in Russia of marking down "black sheep" at the beginning, of extinguishing at the outset the independent spirit which might afterwards show itself in what

are called "University disturbances" and in other inconvenient ways.

But for me this meant the destruction of my career, of all that seemed most promising in life. Staggering under the blow, and brooding over all that had gone before, wild ideas of vengeance for a moment passed through my mind; but, fortunately, my father came to town, and the sight of the kind old man, who had himself suffered enough, softened my heart. For some time I lived by giving lessons, and as statistician in the office of the local *Zemstvo*. This work gave me new evidence of the miserable life of the peasantry. Here I saw it, as it were, in cipher, in a summary drawn from a larger area than one man could know intimately; and once more there arose in me the desire to give my life wholly to the service of the working classes—in the first place, of the peasantry.

It seemed to me that, if it were possible to prepare for the matriculation which in Russia opens the door of the Universities, and to pass the examination without reference to my period at the seminary, I might then enter in the medical faculty, and, having concluded my studies, might go among the peasantry as a doctor, and in that way help in some measure to give them health and strength of mind as well as body. My horizons were being widened

at that time, among other things, by what I read and heard about the Revolutionists. Some clandestine literature had fallen for the first time into my hands; and from this, as well as from narratives of the horrors that were being perpetrated in some of the prisons of the empire, I came to realize that for a long time there had been a few men and women who had not only emancipated their own minds, but had sacrificed talents and wealth, comfort, and even life itself, in the service of the people. Little as I then knew of this unselfish and enlightened minority, I already learned to feel a certain esteem for them.

While I was cherishing this dream, an event occurred which altogether changed my plans, and determined all that followed. One of the daughters of a wealthy man in Poltava, at whose house I was giving lessons, had a friend, an Ukraïnian girl, coming from a local family of the merchant class. She was a beautiful and lovable girl, of good education, having graduated at the local high school, and of exceptional native intelligence. At first I hardly noticed her when we met; but gradually we were drawn together by our studies, and by our common hope of doing something for the common people. She had some acquaintance with the Revolutionists and their ideas; but that did not prevent her sharing the

religious spirit of her family. We often spoke of these things; and, when she learned my plans for the future, she expressed her belief that the position of a priest was far more advantageous than that of a doctor for the purposes I had most at heart. A doctor, she would say, heals the body; a priest, if worthy of the name, sustains the soul, and the mass of mankind wants the latter perhaps more than the former. When I objected that my principles did not coincide with the teachings of the Orthodox Church, she replied that that was no sufficient objection; the main thing was to be true, not to the Orthodox Church, but to Christ, who was a model of sacrifice for humanity. As to the symbols and ritual of the Church, they were symbols and ritual only.

This convinced me; I determined to become a priest, and she agreed to marry me. But the way was by no means smooth. Once I asked the permission of her parents to visit the house, but her mother showed great repugnance and asked me not to come again. My sweetheart said she could not tolerate this, and told her parents they had better give their consent. At the same time I went to Bishop Illarion, told him of my heart's secret, and my decision to become a priest and to ask for a parish, preferably in my native place. The bishop, who had always taken an interest in me, showed himself very kind

on this occasion. He asked the girl's mother to visit him, and, when the old lady came, told her that she was hardly justified in objecting to the match, that he knew me and would pledge himself as to me, beside which I was to become a priest.

This settled the matter. We were married; and after about a year I took orders, having served first as sexton, and then, after a single day as deacon, being ordained a priest. But the bishop refused to send me to our village; he wanted such men in town, he said. So, for the present, I remained in Poltava.

Let me say at once that, during the whole time of my priesthood, I was exceedingly happy, not only because in my wife I had a true friend and co-worker, but also because I liked the position of a spiritual teacher. It seemed to me that these poor people, who are so much oppressed and have often no consolation in their daily lives, received from my preaching and the contagion of my enthusiasm the only relief they had. Especially in the celebration of the Mass, when a vision of the full meaning of Christ's sacrifice came to me, did I feel delight in my work. In such a condition of elation it was, perhaps, inevitable that the more prosaic moments of the ecclesiastical routine should grate upon my nerves. The clink of money

THE ECCLESIASTICAL SEMINARY, POLTAVA.

[*To face p.* 25.

while wax candles were being bought in the vestibule, to be offered before the sacred images, and while the people were dropping their humble gifts into the offertory plates—how it annoyed me! My deacon was a special scourge. Formerly a medical assistant, he had taken to the Church simply as a more lucrative calling, though he did not even profess to believe in immortality. Extremely tall and stupid-looking, with rough voice, dirty boots, and a surplice that hardly covered his knees, his appearance was well-nigh scandalous. He looked at the parishioners exclusively from the point of view of how much they could pay; and at length his greed became so open and insolent that, although I had no right to do so, I forbade his taking any part in the conduct of the service.

I preached frankly that not ritual and offerings, but a good life and kindness to one's neighbour were the essential things. Gradually people gathered to hear me, and, though the church was not at first well attended—it was a special cemetery church, without a parish attached—there were soon so many that the building was often too small for the congregation. The bishop continued friendly, but the other priest of the church began to be jealous. I paid no attention to him, and set about forming a mutual benevolent society for the sake of the poorer people,

who often needed help. This, I soon found, by its very success extended the feeling of jealousy, neighbouring priests raising a clamour on the ground that I was trying to rob them of their congregations. I tried to conform in my life and conduct as a priest with what I taught in my sermons. I did not make my calling a pretext for getting money; I was satisfied with what I received; and this, to say nothing of other reasons, was sufficient to attract many people to me. But while, on the one hand, my popularity increased, on the other, the jealousy of the neighbouring clergy grew.

At last they moved the Ecclesiastical Consistory to fine me, on the ground that, having myself no parish, I had officiated instead of priests who had. This was true enough; yet I dared to repeat the offence. For what did it mean? Once an old man came to me and begged me to conduct a service in memory of his deceased wife. Having already been fined several times, I had become rather cautious. So I asked the old man to what parish he belonged, and why he did not go to his own priest. He replied that his parish priest had asked seven roubles (about fourteen shillings) for officiating, which he could not pay. Asked why so much was demanded, the old man explained that at the time of the burial of his wife he had only

been able to pay three roubles, and, being displeased, the priest now said he must pay for both occasions. Moreover, he had heard my sermons, he said, and felt more drawn to me than to his own priest; and so, falling on his knees, he begged me to come with him. How could I refuse?

The service, as is the custom in Russia, was followed by a kind of memorial dinner. As I sat at the head of the table, and talked to the family on religious and moral questions, the door suddenly opened, and the parish priest, drunk, his hair and dress in utter disorder, rushed in with several servants, and addressed to me a violent complaint, interlarded with foul language, that I was robbing him of his bread. The people were so much irritated that, but for my interference, it would have gone ill with that turbulent cleric.

Once more I was fined.

My married life lasted four years, my priesthood only two. We had two children, a girl and a boy, both of whom are living in Russia as I set down these words in the land of my temporary exile. Immediately after the birth of our boy, my wife became very ill. She did not want to die. Being sincerely religious, she believed in the mercy and omnipotence of God; and, not wanting to part from her beloved ones, she prayed

that she might be allowed to live. But the end came nearer and nearer, and at last she died in my arms.

I believed then, and I believe now, in the spirit of God; but since the death of my wife, and the period of stupor that followed that terrible loss, I had to live through some experiences that are responsible for an addition to the number of my earlier beliefs. One of these experiences was, indeed, the fulfilment of a dream my wife had a month before she died, when she saw, or thought she saw, herself being buried, and told me all about it immediately afterwards. She entered into all the details of who would speak and officiate, and how I would act, and so on; and all this was fulfilled to the letter.

Another experience was this. One night I had been working late, and at about one a.m. I lay down on a couch, but did not, as I believe, fall asleep. Suddenly I saw the form of my dead wife enter the room, come near to me, and bend as though to kiss me. I jumped up, throwing off a coverlet; and, as I stood, I saw through the door a kind of wraith in the corridor. I rushed out, and found that the curtains in the adjoining room were burning. No doubt through the negligence of a servant, a lamp before the icon had burst and set fire to the drapery; and, as the house was of wood and it was summer, if I had

not come in at that moment there might have been a great calamity.

A third experience that I may mention was a dream in which I saw myself hunted and seized by a figure which, as I felt, was my Fate. Since then I have believed in predestination and in some connection between the living and the dead.

After the death of my wife it seemed as if all clear meaning had gone out of my priestly life. No doubt the nearness of her burial-place, which I frequently visited, was a morbid influence; it worked on my nerves so that I began to fear lest my mind should be unhinged. It occurred to me to change the place of my residence, and perhaps to turn over an altogether new leaf in my life. So I determined at length to take steps to procure admission to the Ecclesiastical Academy in St. Petersburg.

I communicated my plan to the bishop; and the old man, no less kind than before, approved the idea, and did everything in his power to help me. The difficulty was that, beside passing an examination, the candidate must have an excellent certificate of conduct. Once again the black marks on my record at the seminary stood against me! However, the bishop wrote a personal letter to the Educational Committee of the Holy Synod through M. Pobyedonostseff, praying that I might be allowed to compete without producing a

certificate from the seminary, and adding that, after two years' acquaintance with my work, he was sure I merited their friendly notice.

With only two months and a half to prepare for the examination, I set to work and went to St. Petersburg full of dreams of getting to the very source of knowledge. I was to be speedily disillusioned.

THE CEMETERY CHURCH, POLTAVA, WHERE GAPON SERVED AS PRIEST.

[*To face p.* 30.

# CHAPTER IV

### EXTREMES MEET IN ST. PETERSBURG

On my way to the capital I stopped at the Troitsky Lavra, the famous monastery which is visited yearly by more than a hundred thousand pilgrims from all parts of Russia, and in which the relics of its founder, the great St. Sergius of Radonyesh, are preserved. This I did according to the desire of Bishop Illarion, who wished me to worship before the relics of St. Sergius. At that time I no longer believed in the indestructibility of the bodies of holy men, but, nevertheless, I felt an imperious impulse to kneel before the saint whose life presented to my mind an ideal to which I was striving with all my heart. He had always tried to live according to his own teaching. He was not one of those saints who isolated themselves in remote deserts, trembling to come into contact with the evil things of life. He preached love to our neighbours, and he loved his neighbours, giving away everything he had to them and living in the simplest way. He preached and practised

forgiveness. And, although he was a saint, he was a great patriot, and for that I loved him still more. He blessed the great Prince Dimitri Donskoy before he went into battle for the deliverance of his country from the yoke of the Tartars, and he gave the prince two of his most trusted monks to help him, who proved to be two of the greatest warriors of the age.

When I approached the monastery, the bell, which is the greatest bell in Russia, was booming solemnly, filling the wide distance—moving the very earth, it seemed to me—with a divine appeal. So I entered the church full of love and veneration for the resting-place of the lover of truth and simplicity, St. Sergius. I hastened towards the shrine with the longing to kneel before it. But at that moment the Metropolitan of Moscow, Vladimir, entered the church, followed by his long train of archimandrites and inferior monks. Vladimir looked simple enough, but the sight of the fat, glossy, clerical dignitaries and monks accompanying him gave me a disagreeable shock. Vladimir began to sing the evening Mass for the glory of St. Sergius, as the following day was the feast of the saint. The monks and clergy, mimicking the metropolitan, bowed and crossed themselves precisely as if they were moved by machinery. But I saw that while they were not occupied in so doing they were indulging in

whispered remarks, jokes, and behaviour most unseemly in a place of worship. The religious ceremony had evidently no meaning for them. Their hypocrisy in the very house of the lover of truth, St. Sergius, filled me with disgust; and I left the church before the end of the service, without having knelt at the feet of my beloved saint, for I felt that it would have been a blasphemy to address him under the eyes of that group of fat, grinning Pharisees.

Returning to my room I found a telegram from St. Petersburg awaiting me, saying that my application for entrance into the Academy would be considered by the Educational Committee of the Holy Synod two days later, so that I had to leave at once.

There being a delay of some hours in the train for St. Petersburg, I went to look at the tower of Ivan the Great in the Kremlin. The sexton, who mounted to the belfry with me, showed me the old bell, which had been taken from the ancient Republic of Novgorod. High up near the clouds, far away from the noise of the crowded streets, I looked upon the bell, its rims chipped and broken by the passage of time; and my imagination conjured up the figures of those men whom in distant ages it had summoned to their free parliamentary meetings. Although I was not then in any way opposed to autocratic rule, I could not help a

vague feeling of sorrow and regret for this free state, which had been subjugated to the sway of autocratic Moscow. I also visited the ancient Cathedral of the Assumption, famous for its choir, which sings the old Russian part-hymns with peculiar power and effect. Listening to the old melodious airs, I became as though unconscious of all around me. The earnest face of my young wife Verochka rose before me; and then again I saw the rows of fat, shining monks in the church of St. Sergius, and again I was overwhelmed with doubt and moved to tears. I did not see much of Moscow. But I liked the town. The narrow, irregular streets; the small, simple houses standing side by side with palatial mansions; the Kremlin, with its historical traditions—it all seemed very near to my heart. The sight of a poor young peasant standing in the middle of the street, praying earnestly in simple faith, with his eyes fixed upon the church, strengthened the impression. But the extraordinary abundance of drinking houses in the town, and the innumerable policemen, whose coarse, flushed faces and red noses bore testimony to their addiction to drink, were extremely disagreeable.

We reached St. Petersburg in the morning, having travelled the whole night; and I was much struck by the appearance of the Russian capital. I had expected to see a great damp

town, full of fog and mist, its inhabitants pale, lean, and nervous, because of their unhealthy and unnatural lives. But it happened that the day was a bright and sunny one in July, and the town appeared at its best—full of cheerful noise and brisk activity. The people I saw on the first day did not seem depressed and gloomy, but, on the contrary, far more energetic and healthy than the inhabitants of my peaceful and poetical Poltava. But the buildings of the town were all of uniform pattern, and looked like so many huge barracks. Indeed, there were many barracks among those buildings, and the whole town was overrun by military and police.

It was not Bishop Illarion alone who took a great interest in my fate, but a rich lady who owned a great quantity of land near Poltava invited me to stay in her town house, on the fashionable Admiral's Quay, and wrote about me to Sabler, the powerful Assistant-Procurator of the Holy Synod. The apartments allotted to me here were very comfortable, and looked out upon the beautiful river Neva. But I was so engrossed in my own thoughts at that time that I scarcely noticed anything, and went as soon as possible to Sabler.

He received me immediately, evidently on account of the very pressing letters of introduction. What I had heard of this high official

before this was not very laudable. I was told that while still a student in the University of St. Petersburg, the young Sabler had regularly visited the churches frequented by Pobyedonostseff, and had been in the habit of placing himself in a conspicuous position before the eyes of the Procurator, and of praying with great earnestness. In this way, it was said, he succeeded in making his acquaintance, and gaining his favour. Later on, Sabler succeeded in becoming a manager of one of the Grand-Ducal palaces, and in course of time acquired the post of Assistant of the Procurator of the Holy Synod, becoming gradually the right-hand of Pobyedonostseff, and replacing him in his duties in case of his absence or illness. Throughout his career he has served, not some principle or ideal, not his country, but his own interests, and anything which might lead to his own enrichment or worldly promotion. I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the stories I was told, but the impressions which Sabler produced upon me was certainly not that of being a pious servant of God. I was received by a tall, grey-haired gentleman, who had an unctuous smile and ingratiating manners. He showed great favour to me, took me to lunch with him, and promised to smooth my way to the Academy.

"We know you were of bad conduct in the Seminary," he said; "we know the ideas you had

at that time. But the bishop has written to me that you have quite changed since you became a priest, and that you have abandoned all your silly notions. Yes, yes, we will let you in; and we trust that now you will think of nothing more than of becoming a faithful servant of the Church, that you will work for the Church and for nothing else. And now you must go to see Father Smyrnoff, the head of the Educational Committee of the Holy Synod. Tell him your story, and then go directly to Pobyedonostseff, who will have heard of you from your bishop."

I went then to the Holy Synod and saw Father Smyrnoff, a fat, worldly, conceited-looking priest, who repelled me by his haughtiness. He blessed me, though, being not of the higher ranks of episcopal clergy, he had no right to bless another priest.

"Well, I really don't know whether you are fit to enter the Academy," he said. "My friend Professor Shchegloff told me of you, how you argued with him about the origin of Christ. You are infected with free ideas, and we don't want such persons in our Church. I must confess that I feel my heart full of perplexity about your entering the Academy."

This meeting discouraged me a good deal, and I decided to try and see Pobyedonostseff immediately. I took the train to Tsarskoye Selo,

where Pobyedonostseff was at that time living in the Imperial Palace. In the same carriage with me was sitting a very respectable-looking gentleman, with whom I soon made acquaintance. He was, it appeared, Pobyedonostseff's special messenger, and he took a fancy to me when he learned that I was a priest in Poltava. He had himself once visited Poltava, accompanying Pobyedonostseff, and had been excellently fed in Bishop Illarion's kitchen. Therefore, Poltava had a warm place in his heart. He told me that Pobyedonostseff prayed frequently in the church of the palace, and took frequent walks in the palace garden, carrying a Prayer-book in his hand and murmuring prayers. He told me also that there was very small chance of seeing him that day, as he did not usually receive any members of the clergy at his summer residence, and on that particular day he had been invited to dine with the Tsar on the occasion of the arrival of the little Bulgarian Prince Boris. Still, he would try to gain me admittance to the Procurator, who, though in the habit of treating the clergy in general rather scornfully, might, perhaps, look more leniently at a priest recommended by Bishop Illarion, who was his especial favourite. When we reached Tsarskoe Selo the messenger kept his word, and I was introduced into the antechamber of Pobyedonostseff's audience-room.

Here I was told to wait the Procurator of the Holy Synod.

I was awaiting the man who had the power to extinguish all the hopes and prospects of my life; and as I waited I pondered in my mind over the sad fate of the Russian Church, so completely dependent upon the will of this one man—a layman, an official of the Government. There is absolutely no autonomous life in the Russian Church. The Holy Synod, ruled by the Procurator, is composed of bishops who, by their very obligation to belong to the monastic order, are held totally aloof from the needs of the people's life and unacquainted with them. And each bishop has absolutely unlimited power over the Church in his own See. He appoints the priests without of necessity being hindered by any considerations regarding the moral or intellectual qualities of the candidate. If it please him he can raise a costermonger or a swineherd to the priesthood. He punishes or dismisses at will any priest in his diocese, leaving him no chance of appeal. Should a priest risk an appeal to the Holy Synod against the decision of a bishop, the Synod would unfailingly forward the complaint to the very bishop against whom it was lodged, for his personal consideration. The priests on their side are absolute masters of the Church property and affairs in their parishes, the parishioners

having no voice in the management. In this way the Church is deprived of any germs of healthy life; it has been transformed into a kind of bureaucratic department of religion under the sway of Pobyedonostseff.

"What do you want?" said a sharp voice, suddenly, from behind me.

I turned round, and saw the withered, monkey-like face and sharp, cold eyes of an old man. It was the great Inquisitor, who had crept noiselessly from behind a door concealed by a curtain. He was of middle size, of lean figure, slightly bent, and dressed in a black evening coat.

"I have come to your Excellency to ask your intercession to enable me to take part in the competitive examination for the Academy," I said.

Pobyedonostseff looked at me inquisitively.

"Who is your father? Are you married? Have you any children?"

The questions were rained upon me in a harsh, dry voice. I replied that I had two children. He exclaimed—

"Ah! Children? I don't like that. What kind of a monk would you make with children? A poor one! I can do nothing for you;" and he turned brusquely to leave me. His manner of speaking, and the thought that all my expectations were to be ruined by him in this careless

and insolent way, raised in me a feeling of indignation and protest.

"But, your Excellency," I cried, "you must listen to me! It is a question of life for me. It is the one thing which remains for me now—to forget myself entirely in studies in order to learn how to serve my people. I cannot take a refusal."

There was probably a note in my voice which arrested him. He turned again towards me and listened in amazement, looking fixedly into my eyes, and then suddenly became kind.

"Yes. Bishop Illarion has told me of you. Well, go to Father Smyrnoff, to his house. He lives now in Tsarkoye Selo. And tell him *in my name* that he must send a favourable report to the Holy Synod." Then he disappeared.

Next day I saw Father Smyrnoff again, and he this time unhesitatingly promised me that the Educational Committee would send a favourable report to the Holy Synod. He advised me to see the President of the Synod, the Metropolitan Palladius, in order to insure the desired result. I followed his advice.

When the Metropolitan had blessed all the petitioners in his audience-chamber, I approached him and explained my desire. The old man had already begun to suffer from softening of the brain, and my demand for some reason threw him into a state of fury. He thumped upon the floor with

his pastoral staff, and began to shout at me, in order to show all those present how a poor provincial priest is to be treated.

"From Poltava? What dost thou want here? Academy? What wilt thou do there? Why dost thou annoy me? Go away!"

I left the room with a heavy heart, and thought my last chance gone. But to my astonishment I was told in the office that the question of my admittance had already been considered in the Synod under the Presidency of Palladius, and had been decided favourably. Let me say that a short time after that Palladius died; and Antonius presently replaced him in the post of Metropolitan of St. Petersburg and President of the Holy Synod. I have met Antonius many times, and I will speak of him presently.

So I set to work for the examination, as only one month was left me. I worked eighteen hours a day, and still I only managed to read once through all the subjects I had to prepare. On the eve of the examination I was quite unnerved; my hands shook to such a degree that I could not hold my pencil. When I tried to ascertain whether I knew my subject I found, to my horror, that not a word of it was in my head. I went to bed in utter distress and fell asleep.

Then again my wife came to me and kissed me, and I felt that the anguish had been lifted

GAPON'S WIFE (THE LEFT-HAND FIGURE) AND HER SISTER.

[*To face p.* 42.

from my soul. Arising next morning consoled and confident, I went to the examination hall and passed all the examinations with full honours; indeed, so well that not only did I matriculate as a student of the Academy, but on account of my honours I received one of the best scholarships, for which only the most successful are eligible.

In this way I became a student in the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg, and began to live in its buildings. Here, I thought, I should at last find an answer to the question of the meaning of Life, which so perpetually tormented me. Here I expected to find space in which my thoughts could develop freely, and freely search for truth, without being hampered by tenets of Church ritualism or social conventionalities. The Alma Mater of pure thought and pure science had opened her doors before me, and I entered with a heart rejuvenated for arduous work and earnest life. The Theological Academy in Russia is the nursery of professors of the educational institutions of the Church as well as of bishops. Those who feel the necessary inclination at the termination of their studies in the Academy take monastic orders, and in due course of time become bishops. Surely, I thought, in one way or another I should, in this sacred domain of knowledge, be enabled to lay foundations upon which I could serve the cause of truth and of my people.

But these hopes were doomed to disappointment. Soon it became evident that the immense majority of the students were as little interested in the search after religious and moral truth as were the professors willing or prepared to help them in such research. The teaching was entirely formal and scholastic. The Holy Scriptures were studied not in their spirit but exclusively in their letter. We were given for guidance a translation of some foreign writer upon the Holy Scriptures; and during the lectures the professors entered upon long explanations of how such and such a sentence in the Holy Scriptures was interpreted by the different Fathers of the Church and by foreign theologians. It was evident that the professors were fearful of revealing their own convictions upon the subject, or even of entering upon a scrutiny of its meaning. We listened to lectures upon other religious creeds, but the professors, in their criticisms of such creeds, carefully avoided entering into their real merits or deficiencies. They confined their criticism to some casual inconsistencies, in order to possess some pretext for declaring the religions utterly valueless. With the exception of one Professor of Church History, M. Bolotoff, who was an earnest man and a powerful intellect, all the others were unfit for the responsible task allotted to them. For instance, the professor who

lectured upon the Deity of Christ was a very young man, who was in the habit of appearing at his lecture with a flushed face and swollen eye. Students who were acquainted with him told me that he spent his nights in drink and base depravity. And after such proceedings this professor dared to come to us, and to speak about the Holy Family with cool familiarity as if he were one of their near relations! How could I fail to feel revolted at such things? And what wonder that the lectures were often attended only by two or three students, and that some of the students themselves imitated their professors in hypocrisy or drunkenness, while others, the best, tried to escape the ecclesiastical profession, and strove to obtain some lucrative situation under the governmental spirit monopoly, or in some other department. Already, in the Ecclesiastical Seminary, I had noticed the sad fact that all the best pupils, after finishing their studies in the Seminary, avoided entering the priesthood, taking instead to some lay profession. The clever and earnest felt unable to stand the strifling atmosphere in which the Russian Church is placed, and by such continuous sifting few, except the ignorant, incapable, or depraved, are left for the Church.

Gradually I lost every interest in the lectures. I saw that I could not get any real knowledge

from the professors. I still tried to take seriously the compositions on theological subjects, which the students were required to write from time to time, and carefully studied the authorities. When in my first composition I defined my ideas as clearly as I could, I received a severe reprimand from the professor. "You must not form your own ideas upon the Gospel," I was told. "Students need only study that which was said by the Holy Fathers." When again, in another composition, I endeavoured to treat the subject honestly, I was threatened with expulsion from the Academy. Again I began to feel the ground little by little slipping from beneath my feet.

At that time the Bishop of St. Petersburg, Benjamin, who had heard of me from Bishop Illarion, invited me to take part in a mission to the working classes, which had its headquarters in the church in Borovaya Street. The factory hands—men, women, and young girls—would gather in this church, while the missionaries addressed them with the view of improving their moral state. This work had fallen through for a time owing to quarrels between the two priests of the church, but now Bishop Benjamin wished that it should be revived. The first gathering of the mission which I attended impressed me very deeply. I saw a crowd of pale, haggard men and women, poorly clad, and bearing the traces of

infinite suffering. But in their eyes I read the eager desire for knowledge and truth. The missionary preached to them about the Commandments, about the evils of drink and dishonesty, and the terrors of the Day of Judgment. I felt that such words could not satisfy the longings of the eager listeners. They needed encouragement to new efforts; they needed more confidence in their own strength; but they left the church more depressed by terrible pictures of the revenge of God. They needed the forgiveness and love of Christ; but they were spoken to in the awful language of Jehovah. How could they help being weak and sinful when their surroundings were deprived of any ray of light or hope? At the next meeting of the missionaries, during which the progress of the campaign was discussed, I expressed my opinion that, in order to strengthen the work of the mission, it was necessary to organize the workmen in mutual self-help and co-operation, that they might better the economic side of their life, which I considered as a necessary preliminary to their moral and religious elevation. But the mission did not see this.

When my turn came to preach I tried to make the people confident of their power to better their lives. But still I felt that I had not told them all I believed, that I had not shown them the way to any real improvement of their lot. I

felt that the mission was not in sympathy with my views, and that, on the other side, I could do nothing for the people I was called to teach. At last I abandoned the mission work in despair. I began to think of a peaceful refuge in some monastery in which I could live with Nature, in prayer, undisturbed by the sight of the evils of life. My mind as well as my bodily health was affected, and my friends, becoming seriously alarmed, raised a subscription, which was supplemented by one from the Academy, in order that I might be sent to some place of rest where there might be a chance of a complete recovery. Accordingly I started for the Crimea.

GAPON AS A YOUNG MAN.

[*To face p.* 48.

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# CHAPTER V

## FALSE SHEPHERDS

On my way to the Crimea I stopped for a short time at Kharkov, and there met no fewer than twenty-three families of educated people who had had situations under the local council at Poltava, but had all been expelled at twenty-four hours' notice by the Governor of the province. Some of these exiles were old acquaintances of mine, and I had many conversations with them. I shall not go into their experiences; but the mere fact that twenty-three families, numbering more than a hundred persons, could be deprived of their means of livelihood and expelled from the province for no offence except the honest performance of their tasks gave me a painful impression of the deficiencies of the existing political order in Russia.

Reaching the Crimea, I went on to the beautiful town of Yalta, staying in the suburb of Tchukulali, where I took pains to recover my health. Tchukulali is situated on a high cliff, and I passed

much of my time watching the glorious sea and revelling in the sunshine and bracing air. My frequent visits to Yalta, I fear, rather tended to arrest my convalescence. It is, above all, a place of fashion, frequented by rich people who come to spend money and get pleasure, often of a disreputable kind, rather than to get health. With disgust I watched the squandering, in reckless and riotous living, of money which was the fruit of the labour of poor peasants whose lot I knew so well; while, side by side with all the prodigality of these homes of pleasure and luxury, there might be seen in the town thousands of miserable creatures, ill-fed, nearly naked, and without shelter.

The town itself presents, indeed, what to any sensitive mind must be a shocking contrast of huge palatial mansions in the centre and abominable slums in the suburbs. In and near the town are palaces and estates of the Tsar; and the sight of this appalling misery at the very doors of the Tsar's palaces and on the borders of his rich estates filled my heart with indescribable bitterness, and did something to poison the happiness and enjoyment of Nature which I had found on these southern hillsides. By a fortunate chance I met Father Nicholas, the Bishop of Taurida. He was not much liked by the people there, who complained of his conceit and haughty manners; but he was very kind to me, and, when he learned

that I was a student of the Academy, became very friendly, and offered me the hospitality of the monastery of St. George. I gladly accepted this invitation.

This monastery is situated on a high mountain overlooking the Black Sea, amid the most beautiful surroundings. Its records go back at least as far as the ninth century. According to the local legend it was founded by some Greek merchants, saved from shipwreck on this rocky coast by the sudden appearance on the cliffs of St. George riding his white horse with his long spear, in obedience to whom the storm subsided. The rocks below are of a red colour; and another legend tells how it was on this very spot that St. George fought the Dragon. Near by there is a cave where Orestes and Pylades are said to have fought in ancient times. It is all classic ground; and at the same time the whole picture is one of severe and majestic beauty. There are no woods on these cliffs; but there are many caves, one so large that it may be entered by boat. There is also a so-called "Marble Valley" with wonderful acoustic qualities: every sound uttered is at once caught and dispersed in many different voices, so that a whole choir seems to be singing. The fresh air and the constant sight of the wide, clear water gave me new health. I loved the sea, and felt

its breathing as though it were a living being. Confidence and strength and belief in my own purposes began to return to me, and my plan of entering a monastic order appeared in a different light from what it had taken when I was weary and in despair.

I soon found that the great natural resources of the place were left unused, while the monks, evading any real work, passed their time in serving the visitors who stayed in the hostel of the monastery. This hostel was always filled with rich holiday-makers, of whom many were young ladies; and the relations between the monks and these guests were anything but what they ought to have been. A large majority of the monks, in fact, passed their time in a frivolous and parasitic way of living upon the income which the hostel brought in; and at the same time over two thousand acres of most beautiful vineyards belonging to the monastery, which might have produced an annual income of twenty pounds per acre, were left in a state of desolation.

The prior was an old man of kind and intelligent face, and apparently of great piety. I was at first very much attached to him, but later on I began to doubt his earnestness. One day we rode to the little chapel of St. George, which was very old and abandoned. I was surprised to find it left in such a condition. On some trees outside

a number of cloth scarves were hanging. I asked the prior what these were for. He replied that not only the Christians but many Tartars in the district believed in the healing qualities of a little spring close to the chapel, which, he said, sprang from a rock that had been struck in passing by the horse of St. George. After telling me this tale the prior piously crossed himself and prayed; but my doubts of his sincerity were confirmed when he went on to say, "We must build a new chapel here; think what an income it will bring to the monastery—thanks to the holy well!" While thousands of acres of good land which might bring in a rich return were lying idle, he preferred to exploit the ignorance of the poor people. Later on, indeed, I saw that the old man sinned in more serious ways than this.

Such contrasts between pious words and impious conduct destroyed little by little my desire for the monastic life. Once, in the chapel of the monastery, I watched a tall, stout, red-faced monk sitting proudly in the confessional. A little old woman, emaciated and bent with years, went to him to receive absolution; and I could not help being shocked as I compared her earnest face and anxious eyes with the self-satisfied look of the burly cleric. One of the monks, named George, a man of about forty-five years of age, enjoyed a wide popularity, not

only among the Christians but also among the Tartars, on account of his peculiar holiness. He passed his time in digging caves in well-nigh inaccessible places on the mountain-side, leaving one, after he had lived in it for a short time, to commence upon another. The Tartars esteemed him because for some time he lived in a cavern which they believed to be the abode of Satan. The roof of this place is so curiously formed that the wind produces wild noises; hence, no doubt, their superstition. I visited this anchorite in company with the Tolstoyan writer, Sergeyenko. A very narrow path running along the mountain led to the hermit's cave. At last we reached the place, but found the path barred with a mound of filth, though the cave itself was perfectly clean; and we were astounded to receive the hermit's explanation that he wished to discourage the visitors, who besieged him in crowds, from coming out of mere curiosity. We had a long conversation with this man, and I came to the conclusion that he had not only forgotten everything that he had been taught in his youth, but that he had lost all real life, and thought of nothing but this curious notion of holiness. The monastery was evidently maintaining him because he was an attraction, and therefore in some degree a source of income. I need hardly say that this kind of penance did not at all appeal to me. I

could not believe in the right of man to think only of his own salvation, least of all in this way, while he left others to relieve the sufferings of his neighbours.

While staying in the monastery I met a number of interesting people, to three of whom I owe, in part, my decision to return to work in the world. The best known of them was the great painter, Vassili Verestchagin. He was living near us, closer to the sea, in a small house with his children, whom he dearly loved. He was an austere and even rough man, strong-willed, but magnanimous; his keen eyes looked out fixedly from beneath thick brows, and the whole appearance of his severe, bearded face bespoke a forcible character. He saw in his art a real mission, and therefore he put it above everything else. I remember once, while he was working in the light of the setting sun, an old school-mate, Admiral S——, came up from the town to see him. Verestchagin was busy with his work, and refused to see any visitors. The admiral begged for at least a short talk, but the painter remained firm, and his friend had to return. "Of course," Verestchagin said to me afterwards, "I should have liked to have a talk with my old acquaintance, but work is above everything. I cannot get at will the moment of inspiration and the proper light, and

I cannot sacrifice such opportunities as remain." He was a man of kind heart, with all his straightforwardness of speech; and his vivacity and vigour were infectious. We often walked together on the cliffs and the beach, and I remember many of our conversations. "I always respect a man," he told me once, "who speaks out his convictions plainly, without regard to the consequences. I can see clearly that you also have passed through some tragedy; and I will tell what I think of it. Throw off your cassock! Give it up! There is plenty of work to do in the world, which needs all the energy we can give it." Verestchagin was a thorough realist in art. He considered that only that work of art is great which fully reflects the reality of Nature. "It is," he would say, "the tasks of the artist to find out in Nature and life such subjects as correspond with, and into which he may infuse, his ideas." He condemned, for instance, the famous picture of Ivanoff of the "Appearance of Christ," in which Christ was represented as returning from the desert with rough, torn clothes, but smooth hair. "How," asked Verestchagin, "could anybody coming from the desert have smooth hair?"

Another of those I met was a Russian political writer, G. Jantshieff, an Armenian by race. He impressed me very much by his sincere devotion

to the people. He told me with tears in his eyes about the massacres of the Armenians at Sassoun. An old idealist of the forties, a man of gentle birth named Michailoff, was the third man who induced me to abandon altogether my thoughts of a monastic career. "Give up your cassock," this nobleman advised, as the great artist had already done, "and then you can work more freely for the good of your country."

I passed nearly a year altogether in the Crimea, visiting from time to time the beautiful little village of Balaclava, which is locally called the "Gem of God," and many of the monasteries in the district, in all of which I got the same impression of wasted opportunities and useless and even disreputable life which I had already received. Everywhere I saw rich lands lying idle, the monks living on the superstition of the people, and feeding that superstition in order to maintain themselves in a sluggish and depraved life. I went about vainly trying to find any place where there was carried on a real service of God. Everywhere there were the same sights. The priors, mostly ignorant men, not only did not resist the immorality and idleness reigning in the places entrusted to them, but even encouraged it; and if any among them proved to be too severe, the monks knew how to get rid of him. Every day I saw more clearly that these thousands of

monasteries—there are more in Russia than in any other country in the world—are nothing but nurseries of vice and machinery for increasing the superstition of the people. Yet how useful all those beautiful spots might be to the nation! What splendid schools, libraries, hospitals, they would make! What parks for the enjoyment of the people! The most beautiful places in the Crimea, as in other parts of Russia, belong to the monasteries, and are turned not to the good but to the evil of the people. The time will come when this will be changed.

My health now completely restored, I returned with new confidence and hope to St. Petersburg.

# CHAPTER VI

## AMONG THE OUTCASTS AND THE WORKMEN

I DECIDED to continue my studies in the Ecclesiastical Academy, thinking that by graduating there I might obtain a position which would enable me to devote myself very largely to work amidst the industrial classes of the capital. Remembering my late wife's wish, however, the idea of abandoning the priesthood was very unwelcome. On returning to the Academy, I made up my mind to give to my studies only so much time as was necessary to pass the examinations, and to devote the remainder to coming into closer touch with the working classes in the city. Hearing of my return, Sabler, Pobyedonostseff's assistant, invited me to take part in a brotherhood mission in the church over which he had immediate control. This church, called that of the Holy Mother of Pardon, is situated in the part of St. Petersburg called the Haven.

It is a low-lying district near the river, which frequently overflows, causing great misery among

the poor people who live there. The Baltic wharves and many manufactories and mills are situated in this quarter. Here I preached on duty and happiness, and very soon my congregation increased so that the building could not hold it. Often more than two thousand people gathered to hear me.

But this was not enough. It seemed to me that words should be followed immediately by deeds, and I began to ponder what practical plan I could offer to the workmen for the betterment of their life. I recommended them to organize a brotherhood of mutual help. This scheme I first communicated to the leading priest of the church, who was pleased with it and gave me leave to carry it out. The congregation was evidently greatly pleased, also. The idea of forming such a brotherhood quickly spread among the workmen. My senior priest communicated the plan to the bishop, who was also Rector of the Academy, and asked him to preach in the church on the subject.

It now seemed as though every prospect was favourable. I eagerly anticipated the day when my proposal should be officially sanctioned and the organization established. But Sabler refused to agree, possibly because of some unfavourable report presented to him by some of the officials of the Church, who had become jealous of the attachment the parishioners showed toward me.

To my great disappointment sanction was refused, on the ground that there already existed an organization for mutual help during the periodical inundations. This organization, however, only existed for occasional emergencies, and was entirely in the hands of the clergy; while the essence of my plan was that it should be permanent, and that its management should be completely in the hands of the people themselves, so that it should help to train them in self-respect and confidence in their power of co-operation.

Seeing that I could not do what I had told them was necessary, it appeared impossible to remain in the mission; and I therefore resigned, refusing at the same time to continue working in the Society for the Spread of Religious and Moral Instruction, which was managed by Dr. Filosoff-Ornatsky, who had now unfortunately become the right hand of the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg. This society was under the special patronage of the Emperor and the Government, and was, in fact, used to hold the people under official influence. I felt that I could not take part in its work, not only for this reason, but because it seemed to me quite ridiculous, for instance, to see a young student of the Academy, about twenty years of age, preaching chastity to a crowd of old men and women, or urging them to take, in the name of temperance,

pledges to refrain from drinking for a certain period, when I found that, having once broken their promise, they became so desperate over their perjury that they drank more than ever in order to forget it. I thought that the most necessary thing was to give these people some more solid knowledge, something that would enlarge their intelligence and enable them to think and act for themselves. The preaching of abstract principles to them seemed to me useless.

I made the acquaintance of many workmen at this time, going among them at their work on the Baltic wharves and entering into conversation with them. They got to trust me, and some of them confessed to having become infected with political ideas. I did not at that time think that political change was necessary. I told them that by some industrial organization they might reach better results for their own elevation than by entering into conflict with the Government. But I felt very deeply the despair with which they regarded their position. Once, as I passed near a workman in one of the smelting works, he said to me, "Is hell worse than this?" And when, in answer, I mentioned the name of God, he cried angrily, "There is no God! I have prayed to Him hundreds of times that He might save me from this hell, where we

are tortured in the struggle for our bread, but He has not done what I asked."

Meanwhile I continued my studies in the Academy, and when I was in the second year I was offered a position of *locum tenens* for the leading priest in the new church attached to the second Orphange of the Blue Cross. This also was situated in the workmen's quarter. I accepted the offer, and applied myself to making the Church successful. At the same time I was offered the place of teacher of the Bible in the Olga Poor House, which is under the special patronage of the Empress.

To reach these two places, I had to pass an immense field, called Haven Field—a great open plain which, instead of being made a playing-ground for the children, is a real danger to the public health: in the first place from the refuse that is thrown there, and also because it is a great gathering-place of the outcasts of the town, those unfortunate beings whose life and sufferings have been so fully described by Maxim Gorky. I often stopped here on my way and made the acquaintance of some of these outcasts, and tried to help them in whatever way I could. Their sad fate touched me deeply. At that time I had no idea of attempting to assist in the reformation of society through the organized efforts of the working classes. I simply went to the most

suffering and forsaken, moved solely by the desire to be a help to them. Even those wretched outcasts at Haven Field, who at night-time attacked and robbed the passers-by, and during the day lay and rested in their hopeless squalor and drank vodka—if they had any money with which to procure it—should not, it seemed to me, be outside the reach of human charity. There was another place of the same kind called Maiden Field, from the new Convent of the Virgin which is close to it, where the outcasts congregated, men, women, and children; and this place, too, I often visited.

The more I learnt of the life of these unfortunates, the more touched I felt for them; the problem of how to help them filled my mind more and more. To get to the root of it, I began to visit the private lodging-houses, which in St. Petersburg, as in other cities, supplement the altogether inadequate shelter offered by municipal effort. In many of them the sanitary conditions were absolutely deplorable, the air being sometimes so foul that, according to the Russian expression, "you would need an axe to cut it." At first I disguised myself and spent some nights in these shelters; and then, when I had become familiar enough with them, I began to visit them regularly in my priest's gown in the evening, finding at length a workman

intelligent enough to help me in conducting a short service. After this the poor folk would gather round for conversation, and would tell me their stories. They had found a friend, and I had found that even in these uttermost depths, where humanity has become so grievously broken and defaced, the power of friendship may still redeem even those who seem to be most lost.

It was, I suppose, inevitable that this should come at last to the ears of the police. One day I received a request from the Prefect of St. Petersburg, General Kleygells, who is now Governor-General of Kieff, to visit him at his office. He inquired what I was doing; and I explained to him fully the reasons which had led me to study the conditions of this, the poorest class of all, and told him I was trying to find out how these unfortunate people could be regained to an honest and decent life. I added that I hoped to embody my conclusions and proposals in a report; and he, professing to be very much interested, and seeing that I had absolutely no political purposes in my work, let me go in peace.

The outcasts may be divided into three classes. To the first belong poor workmen who for one reason or another have lost their employment, cannot find a new place, and, having families at home for whom they cannot provide, have

begun to drink, hoping thus to find oblivion, and then, falling lower and lower, in energy as well as in appearance, reach at last this lowest point. In this class I also include girls or women who, having lost their character, are forced through the conventionalities of society into the ranks of the hopeless outcasts. Very often these people can hardly be held responsible for their position; they still have some will left and a faint hope that by some happy chance they may yet be able to return to their former life. Of a quite different type are those who for reasons of education and inheritance are devoid of any personal will, and do not possess even the hope of better things. To a third group belong those who provide constant new recruits to the criminal classes. Some of them are really wicked by nature, and might therefore be considered as born criminals. Others are poor fellows who, having been imprisoned for some slight offence and having finished their term of punishment, find themselves, on returning to the free world, complete outlaws. By the Russian law, prisoners on their release receive a police *marcheroute*—an order expelling them from the city, with which they proceed from the prison of one town to another, to a certain place of destination. But as, on reaching the end of the journey, no one will employ persons just released with a mark on

their passport, they immediately start walking back—and some walk hundreds and even thousands of miles—hoping to get taken on again in their old situations. Not having permission to live in the city where they were imprisoned, however, this hope is absolutely futile; and they are thus forced automatically into the ranks of the outcasts, until the police find them, arrest them once more, and send them again from prison to prison to some provincial place. Under this insane system thousands of men spend years in useless peregrination, in course of which many of them catch diseases and die.

Among the outcasts I met I was often startled to find really gifted individuals. There were some who had had high situations, there were officers of the army, barristers, and even members of aristocratic families. It was plain that many of them might again become useful members of society if only they could be put in human conditions, and could be inspired with some confidence in themselves.

I wrote a report fully explaining my plan for the regeneration of the outcasts by the establishment of a series of labour-houses in the great towns and labour-colonies in the country, the fundamental principles of which were that labour must be the only criterion, and that every one must work.

Every person in the ranks of the unemployed classes just described would have to enter one of these houses or colonies; but he would have before him a free choice between certain kinds of work, and accordingly of the type of house or colony he would like to enter. There would be three groups of these institutions. The first would be that of compulsory work, to which criminals would be subjected; and the overseers and officials of this lowest grade would be nominated by the Government. The workmen here would be always encouraged to self-improvement and participation in the organization of the work, and would be in every way interested in their own advancement. There would be only a certain percentage of their earnings given to them, the rest going to the organization of the enterprise. Labour being the criterion, those who proved deserving would be encouraged to pass into the second grade, where the co-operative principle would be much more largely applied. Here the working members would elect their foremen and other officials, and would almost entirely conduct the workshop or colony, and one-half of the value of their work would be considered as belonging to them individually. This grade would be of large educational value, and would prepare for the highest grade of workhouses and colonies, which would practically be a free co-operative enterprise,

nearly the whole earnings belonging to the members, and it being an obligation when the workman had accumulated a certain amount of money, say three hundred roubles (£30), to leave the Association in order to make place for new-comers.

In every part of this organization the Church would be a centre of religious and moral influence; and even in the life of the Church the workman would take a very large part, organizing the choirs, helping in the services, and largely managing its business. Thus, even in this case active and intelligent participation in the common life would be invited. The whole of the institutions would be managed by a committee composed largely of the active working men in the houses and colonies, those who have passed through the highest grade being encouraged to remain members, and to participate upon the payment of a certain subscription. Finally, those who felt inclined to devote their life to the welfare of the lowest classes might remain as permanent members, giving their earnings for that cause, and applying their efforts for the study and assistance of their less happy fellows. The initial resources for the organization would have to be given partly by public subscription, partly by local authorities, and partly by the Government. But I anticipated that, when it was fully established, it would pay its own expenses and leave a margin

sufficient for the development of the scheme. It would only be necessary that the local authorities and the Government should resign their present system of doing public work through contractors and middle-men. The workmen are now terribly exploited by middle-men, while the local authorities lose large sums of money through their work being badly done. Public work, according to my plan, should be given to these co-operative societies, and this simple change would ensure the success of the scheme.

I talked the matter over with a large number of the unemployed whom I knew, and it was discussed by many groups of them, and its general principles cordially accepted, a statement of my aims receiving about seven hundred signatures.

I made the Prefect of St. Petersburg, General Kleygells, acquainted with my report, to which I added a criticism of the existing workhouses, showing their complete inadequacy, their failure to develop the will of the men, and to provide them with any help upon their leaving. I also sent a copy of this report to General Maximovitch, who is the general director of the workhouses patronized by the Empress. He professed to be very much pleased and to fully sympathize with the scheme. He ordered it to be printed at once, and gave a copy of it to General Tanyayeff, a

great favourite of the Tsar, who, as chief of His Majesty's Chancellery, had the rank of Minister, and who was the vice-president of the Committee of Workhouses, the president being the Empress. Tanyayeff reported upon the scheme to the Empress, who, as I was told, was impressed by it, and desired that it should be discussed by the committee in her own presence at a meeting to which I should be invited to explain it. This success of my report greatly encouraged me, and I intended to give up my life and study to the working out of the scheme. But my hopes soon proved premature. Month after month passed without the conference being called. General Maximovitch, who professed to be very keen about it, consoled me with various explanations: now the Empress was ill, now she had had to leave the capital, and so on. Bureaucratic red tape was evidently going to kill my scheme.

The news of it spread in Society, and members of some of the highest aristocratic families began to show interest in the subject and in myself. I was invited to a number of *salons* of titled persons surrounding the Court, and began to become familiar with them. During these visits I made the acquaintance of all sorts of representatives of these classes; and especially often I visited the *salon* of Mme. de Khitrovo, a spirited lady,

the widow of the late Hoff-Marshall Khitrovo, formerly Russian Minister to Japan. There I had plenty of chances of studying Society life, and I found it very far from enviable. In their words, as well as in their deeds, these people seemed to me to move in one great round of artificiality. Their life appeared exceedingly tedious, exhausting, and unsatisfying. Their interest in philanthropy was feverish, but quite superficial. At first I believed in their good intentions; and, when they asked me to inquire into the conditions of such or such a poor family, I rushed off, carefully studied the case, and reported upon it, at the cost of time and even of money. But I soon found that these efforts were useless; there was no real interest behind the inquiries, and no real desire to cure the evil. All they wanted was a new kind of distraction. The same unreality I found in their supposed yearning for religion. They would constantly develop great interest in the life of Christ, and ask me to instruct them in it; but I found that what they really wanted was something quite different.

There was, however, one old lady for whom I had the greatest respect. This was Princess Elizabeth Narishkin, first lady-in-waiting on the Empress, a member of the very highest aristocracy, and standing in very high favour with the Tsar and the Imperial family. She was also a virtuous

GEORGEY GAPON, WITH AUTOGRAPH.

[*To face p.* 72.

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and intelligent woman, and a number of philanthropic institutions organized by her were of a really satisfactory character. I was often invited to her house, and had long conversations with her. It was under her influence that I began to idealize the Emperor Nicholas II. She told me that while he was still a child she used to carry him in her arms, and that he grew up under her eyes. She assured me that she knew him as well as her own children, and she always characterized him as a really good, kind, and honest man, but, unfortunately, very weak of will and devoid of any strength of character. In my imagination there then grew up a kind of ideal Tsar who had not yet had an opportunity of showing his real worth, but from whom alone the salvation of the Russian people could be expected. I thought that the day would come when the Tsar would suddenly rise to the height of the situation with which he was faced, and would listen to the voices of his people and make them happy.

During this time I continued my work in the church of the Olga Refuge and in the second Blue Cross Refuge. My position in both places had become stronger. In the latter I was soon elected as the manager, a distinction which was reported to the authorities of the Academy and to the Metropolitan, who were much pleased.

In this position I used to come into frequent contact with the president of the committee of all the refuges, a Mr. Anitchkoff, who was also a member of the City Council. He showed great friendliness in his own peculiar way, and, in a state of greater or less insobriety, used to open his heart to me as to his many exploits in public life. He told me of many dishonest transactions in which he had taken part in connection with the City Council. Several times he invited me to his house, where he offered me wonderful vodkas, which, as he said, were stolen and brought to him by his uncle, the manager of the commissariat of the Winter Palace. He told me many queer stories of life in the Imperial Household. The number of servants in the palace is enormous, there being about seventy cooks alone, and every cook, I was told, stole as much as he could. Robbery is, in fact, practically the general rule. It was with deep grief that I heard of these things, and reflected how, instead of continuing this useless waste of the people's money, the Tsar might live a simpler life and set a better example to the world.

At first, taking Anitchkoff simply as a good-hearted fellow, I in return told him about the ignorance prevailing among the masses of the people and their exploitation. Soon, however, I learned that his friendliness was but a screen

for actual perfidy, and that he was doing his best to ruin me. I believe that the chief motive of the intrigues against me in which he was presently involved was the critical passages of my report to the Refuges Commission. The details of these criticisms would hardly be of interest to foreign readers. Suffice it that I showed that some of the refuges for which Anitchkoff, Baron Witte, and some other influential persons were responsible were badly managed and completely failed of their ostensible purposes. Anitchkoff's only idea of reply was to rake up against me what he tried to represent as dubious incidents in my past life, and to embroider these with slanders which he invented. The only thing that I really had to fear was the consequences of my undoubted friendship for the poor and the outcast. The workmen had showed an increasing interest in my services, and filled the church in greater and greater numbers. Sometimes I spoke to them about the hardness of their lot and the oppression they had suffered, and it is likely enough that I used unguarded phrases.

I came into constantly closer contact with the factory hands, and learned much of their conditions of life. Their situation was indeed a hard one. There are in St. Petersburg about two hundred thousand factory workers, the larger number of these being engaged in the textile and

machine industries, and concentrated in certain quarters of the city. Their wages ranged from twenty-eight shillings a month upward, only the very best skilled hands receiving as much as seventy shillings a month. The foremen frequently treated the men with great injustice and brutality, extorting bribes from them under threat of dismissal, and giving preference to their own relatives and friends. When a conflict arose between masters and men, the factory inspectors, who have in Russia the power and duty of settling industrial disputes, nearly always took the side of the employers, using all their efforts to induce or force the men to submit. Even the factory doctors proved themselves faithful servants of the masters who paid them, and often in cases of accident managed in a very cruel way to deprive the workmen of compensation.

All these causes, operating in a community where officials and police have absolute and arbitrary power, and where there is no means whatever of securing personal justice, were increasing the discontent of the workmen. The nature of their occupations implied a certain degree of intelligence and instruction; and, in proportion to this intelligence and instruction, they showed signs of becoming desperate under the many abuses against which they had to struggle. They often told me how much they

would like to obtain the right of establishing a really free professional organization, explaining to me what advantages it would bring them. Some of them were already acquainted with the publications of the revolutionary parties, and they used to repeat to me ideas they had there gathered, unconsciously helping in this way to extend my own horizon. It was not a case, therefore, of propaganda among the workmen by an educated person, but rather, on the contrary, the workmen who moved me to a perception of how alone their needs could be satisfied. I began to see what a tremendous influence it might be for the amelioration of the conditions of labour in Russia if this large body of workmen could be combined and taught how to protect their own interests.

But the unexpected intrigues to which I have referred came near to cutting short my efforts. At that time the Duchess Lobanoff Rostovsky had offered me the position of priest in the Red Cross Society. I decided to accept the offer and to leave the Refuges, and the Metropolitan Antonius agreed in principle that I should do so. That was at the beginning of my fourth and last year at the Academy. But the Managing Committee of the Orphanage was by no means pleased, fearing the effect of my removal to a neighbouring church upon the large congregation which I had gathered at the Olga Orphanage. Lending

an ear to Anitchkoff's libels, they sent a report to Bishop Innocent, who was temporarily filling the place of the Metropolitan Antonius, and prevailed upon him to deprive me of my situation and expel me from the Academy.

At the same time Anitchkoff denounced me as a revolutionist to the "Okhranoe Otdelenye"—the Central Department of the Political Police. One day a high official of that department, named Mikhailoff, visited me at my lodgings, with the object of inquiring into the matter. I told him my story; and he replied with great kindness and friendliness, professing sympathy with the liberation movement. Probably upon his report to his chief, the Metropolitan Antonius, who had in the mean time returned to his post, received me in audience and reinstated me in my situation and in my position in the Academy, where I continued in my rooms to receive my friends among the workmen, and to discuss their interests with them. What follows will help to explain this curious episode, in which I received my first help from the Russian police.

# CHAPTER VII

## I MEET ZUBATOFF

One day Mikhailoff came to the Academy to see me. He said that a certain personage wished to make my acquaintance, and asked me to go with him. Taking me under his charge, he brought me to a huge building on the Fontanka, which bore the simple but significant inscription, "Department of the Police." There we passed through a number of large rooms, all of them filled with little black boxes, which, as I learned afterwards, contained the history and photographs of political suspects in various parts of the Empire. The collection is known in Russia as "The Book of Fate."

"You are going to see Mr. Zubatoff," Mikhailoff told me. I did not at that time know anything about the Department of Police, or Zubatoff, the powerful chief of the political section; but my curiosity was fully awakened. We entered a splendid reception room, and there I was introduced to Sergius Vasilivitch Zubatoff, a short,

strongly built man of about forty years of age, with chestnut-brown hair, winning eyes, and simple manners.

"My colleague, Mikhailoff," he said, with a friendly gesture, "has spoken well of you. He said that you are in frequent communication with the working men, that you have influence with the people, and easy access to them. That is why I am so glad to make your acquaintance. I myself have but one object in my life, and that is to help the working men. You know, perhaps, that I first tried to do so from inside the revolutionary camp, but I soon found that that was not the proper way of doing any real good. So I tried to organize the workmen in Moscow, and I may claim to have succeeded. We have there a very strong organization, with its own library, courses of lectures, and societies for mutual help. You will see how strong it is when I tell you that on February 19 (the anniversary of the emancipation of the serfs) fifty thousand workmen in Moscow united in laying a wreath before the statue of Alexander II. I know that you are interested in the same cause, and I would like you to work with us." And he asked me to visit him at his house to discuss the matter further on the following day.

The mention of the wreath struck me rather unpleasantly, for I knew from the workmen themselves that it was an altogether artificial show of

loyalty. The workmen, in fact, understood well how hollow a reform the emancipation had proved. Nevertheless, I wanted to know what Zubatoff would say next, and I agreed to visit him.

"Meanwhile," he said, "I will send you one of our organizers—a workman named Sokoloff, an excellent fellow."

My former guide drove me back to the Academy. "Well," he asked, "how do you like Zubatoff?" "What is he?" I asked innocently. "Is he a detective?" "He can hardly be said to be that," said Mikhailoff. "He is one of those who sympathize with the Revolutionary Movement, and, indeed, he often helps the Revolutionists themselves with money. You see, he is a real statesman, and now he has special plans for bettering the lot of the workmen, as you will see for yourself."

The same day the workman Sokoloff came to me. This man, as I learned afterwards, was in the hands of Zubatoff and the Government, and was one of their chief instruments in the curious work of organizing the Moscow factory hands in an association under the supervision and direction of the Secret Police; and he was also one of the chief actors in the St. Petersburg organization of the same kind. But though in this way connected with the Secret Police, I do not doubt that he was sincerely convinced that he was doing good work

for his class. He struck me, indeed, as a brave and intelligent fellow. During the interview we had he spoke to me with pride of the education that was being given by the Moscow Workmen's Association, for which professors and other educated men were delivering lectures; and in the course of our talk he gave me a leaflet by Leo Tikhomirov,* lithographed in imitation of the rougher kind of revolutionary prints, in which he praised the workmen for placing the wreath on the statue of Alexander II. Sokoloff spoke to me with delight about this expensive wreath. I said that it seemed to me rather a pity to organize the men, not for self-help, but to waste their hard-earned savings in such a way.

"Yes," he said; "but this will please the Tsar, and if he is pleased with us he will grant us the concessions we want." Sokoloff told me something also of the organization established in St. Petersburg, in which several professors of the Ecclesiastical Academy were taking part. He said that the first meeting of the society was to take place very shortly, and that the workmen would be very much pleased if I would join them

* Tikhomirov was, in the early eighties, one of the members of the famous Executive Committee of the Narodnaya Volya, by which the assassination of Alexander II. was organized. In 1887 he suddenly turned renegade from the revolutionary party, and was then allowed by the Government to return to Moscow, where he became a contributor to the reactionary Press.

by leading the service which is usual on such occasions. I promised to consider this request. Next day I went to see Zubatoff at his apartments in the building in the Department of the Police. He received me in the friendliest manner in his sumptuous rooms, and we talked until three o'clock in the morning. He expounded at great length his views on political and social questions, and his ideas of how work for the betterment of the industrial conditions should be conducted. "Our great advantage," he said, "is that we have an Autocrat; he stands above all classes, and, being on this moral height and in a position of social independence, he can play the part of a balance of power. Until now the Tsar has been surrounded by men of the upper classes, who influence him so that his policy may be chiefly to their profit. Now, what we need is that the workmen should organize themselves, and on their side should be able to influence the Tsar, so that they would counterbalance the influence of the upper classes, and the reign of the Emperor would become absolutely impartial and beneficial to the nation."

This sounded very specious, but I could not refrain from putting the question, "But why, then, should you wish to retain the Autocracy? Would it not be much quieter and safer for the Tsar himself if he left political parties to struggle

with each other as they do in England or in France? It seems to me that if your theory is right, a constitutional *régime* would be much more practical." "Oh yes, yes," answered Zubatoff; "that's the very thing towards which I am striving. I am a constitutionalist myself, but, you see, the thing cannot be done at once. Leo Tikhomirov, for instance, advocates the maintenance of Autocracy, and proves that it is much more beneficial to our cause for the time being than a constitutional *régime*, so that we have now to organize the workmen, and to do that without the interference of the intellectual classes, who frighten the Government. When that is done we can go on more logical lines;" and, saying this, Zubatoff handed me the pamphlet which Tikhomirov published when he left the Revolutionary Movement, and in which he tried to explain "How I Ceased to be a Revolutionist."

I had made up my mind at the beginning to be cautious. Thinking that I had now perhaps gone too far, therefore, and that Zubatoff might have me arrested after I left his hospitable abode as a suspected person, I added, "Of course, I do not say myself that I am a constitutionalist at all, but I have tried to reason from your point of view, and I have been extremely interested in your ideas." "Yes, of course," he replied; "but I also am a constitutionalist. What I object

to is the mixing up of the students and other intellectuals in the workmen's movement. I should much rather see a man like yourself help to organize it. The intellectual classes are only agitating for their own political purposes; all they want is to get political power for themselves, using the workmen merely as tools, and we must struggle against this selfishness and this duping of simple people."

Again I could not refrain from remarking, "But do not the doctors work in a self-denying manner among the people in the villages, and have not the intellectuals, the students, and Revolutionists often sacrificed their own lives for what they thought right?" "Yes," he answered, "they do sacrifice themselves; but what comes of it? They killed Alexander II. He was quite prepared to grant important reforms, but, of course, after such a deed the Government had to retrace its steps, and a long period of reaction began. It is due to these very Revolutionists that the development of the working class has been postponed so long."

I did not argue any more, for fear of betraying my sympathy with the heroic figures of the Russian Revolutionary Movement, of whose deeds I had heard much from my own workmen.

At the end of our conversation Zubatoff asked me, "Well, what do you think? Will you join

us and help us?" "I will think of it," I said; "I cannot decide at once. I am going to Moscow for my Christmas holidays, and there I will study the working of the association on the spot, and I shall see my way better."

One other little incident of this interview remains in my memory.

During our conversation an officer of the Political Police came into the room with an air of mystery, and handed to Zubatoff a small cardboard roll of the kind used to carry papers safely through the post. He whispered a few words to Zubatoff, who, with an eager look, began hastily to tear the coverings off. At last he came to a thin sheet of paper. What it contained I do not know, but Zubatoff seemed highly pleased. Still he went on tearing off sheets from the roll; and finally there appeared—a copy of the clandestine journal of the Socialist Revolutionist Party, *Revolutionary Russia.*

The face of the great police agent positively beamed with delight. I understood that he had made a useful find, and I could not but contrast the benevolence with which he had been speaking of the cause of the people and the way in which he was gloating over the approaching fate of some unhappy fellow who had dared to introduce into Russia a publication certainly more truthful than those which pass the censorship.

"This is the poison they spread among the people," said Zubatoff, striking the paper with his hand; and he drew open a drawer to show me a pile of the same kind of poison.

I took out the first pamphlet I came to—if I am not mistaken, it was by Prince Kropotkin—and asked innocently whether I might take it with me and look it through.

"Certainly," said my host. And so I spent a night of absorbed interest in company with Kropotkin.

A few days later I went to Moscow. Sokoloff introduced me to a certain Afanasieff, who was the chief organizer of the Workmen's Association in Moscow. It appeared that there was a secret Workmen's Council organized by Zubatoff and Trepoff, who was at that time Chief of the Police and the great favourite of the Grand Duke Sergius, then the Governor-General. Afanasieff, who himself came from the ranks of the workmen, lived in luxurious apartments, and his servant made me wait a long time—I suppose by way of impressing me with the importance of the occasion. When at last I was received, I saw a young man with piercing eyes, who at once began to speak of his work with great enthusiasm. "The business is going on excellently. We have now not only mechanics in the association, but the weavers and dyers are joining in large

numbers." He spoke for some time of his work and hopes; but somehow I felt unsatisfied and even suspicious.

I next went to a former pupil of mine, who had a printing office in the city. "Tell me," I said, "how I can get to the roots of the business." He directed me to a certain journalist who had previously delivered lectures on Co-operation under the auspices of Zubatoff's committee, and who had since left the organization. I found him to be an extremely intelligent and sympathetic man, who readily answered my questions.

"This association," he said, "is a clever trap, constructed by the police in order to separate the working classes from the intellectuals, and in this way to kill the political movement. It is weakening the power of the workmen very much. The organizers, with the help of the Secret Police, are doing their best to divert the attention of the people from political ideas. They allow the workmen a limited right of meeting, but during the discussion the agents of the Secret Police are fishing out the cleverer and more intelligent men, whom they arrest afterwards. In this way they hope to permanently deprive the movement of its natural leaders. Afanasieff himself has just betrayed a young schoolmistress—a most beautiful character—who had devoted all her time and energy to teaching

some of the workmen in a Sunday school. He has also betrayed many other persons, and arrests of the more prominent of the men are constantly taking place. At first I did not understand the real character of the business and the intentions of Zubatoff, and I myself, with Professor Oseroff and several other educated persons, agreed to deliver lectures to the workmen. But I soon discovered the direction in which the association was moving, and I left it, together with other intellectuals. Oseroff was forced to leave by his colleagues of the University, after something like a trial in regard to his action had been held."

All this, supported by other information, filled my mind with disgust. The organizers of the association drew large salaries from the Political Police, and lived in luxury. Gringmuth, the editor of the reactionary paper, *Moscovsky Viedomosti*, was one of its patrons, together with the Bishop of Moscow—Parfeny—and General Bogdanovitch, a profligate writer, whose deceitful pamphlets are circulated gratis to the labouring people in village and town by the police. I began to see clearly that the only aim of the association was to check every healthy growth in the labour movement, and therefore I decided that to join Zubatoff's work would be not only immoral, but even criminal.

On the 6th of January, 1903, I attended a

special service in celebration of the baptism of Christ in the Cathedral of the Assumption. This ought to be a very solemn office, and it was attended by all the dignitaries of Moscow, Trepoff included; but it produced a very gloomy impression upon me. Instead of the sincere prayers which should come from pure hearts on such an occasion, I saw before me a parade of uniforms; and nobody seemed to be thinking of the meaning of the occasion, but only of their own pose and of their neighbours. The common people were treated in the roughest fashion by the police outside, and I had to remonstrate with one policeman, who struck a poor man in the mouth without any plausible reason. Why, I thought to myself, these self-appointed guardians are pretending to organize the workmen for the elevation of their lives, and here they are treating them as though they were cattle!

# CHAPTER VIII

## THE END OF THE OFFICIAL LABOUR MOVEMENT

I RETURNED to St. Petersburg, sadder and wiser; and at once began to write a report about Zubatoff's plan. In this I tried to explain that his policy was ill-founded, that it could only demoralize those who took part in the movement, and that the only way in which the labouring classes could really better their condition was that which has been adopted in England—that is to say, their organization in perfectly free and independent unions. I sent this report to General Kleygells, and another report to the Metropolitan Antonius, explaining in the latter that the participation of the clergy in the movement could only bring discredit upon the Church. Kleygells, with whom I had an interview, and the Metropolitan Antonius both pronounced themselves against Zubatoff's policy, and Zubatoff probably learned this, for he became still more anxious to gain my co-operation. His lieutenant, Sokoloff, paid me frequent visits with

the idea of converting me. Zubatoff arranged for another interview with me in the house of a friend of his, and I agreed to come, partly because I wanted to learn everything I could about his plans, and partly because I saw more and more clearly the necessity of organizing the masses of the people.

At that time Russia was under the sway of the late M. de Plehve, and the misery of the people was increasing in direct proportion with the increase of the oppressive measures of the Government. I had read some little time before this a pamphlet by Stepniak, and had been much struck with his argument that nothing but the organization of the working classes for their own defence would bring about a real advance in Russia. I did not yet see my way clearly. My report of the scheme for regenerating the outcasts was dragged from committee to committee, and I saw no prospect of any satisfactory end of this process. I yearned to do some real work for my people, but I knew well that I should meet with insuperable obstacles from the police if I took a perfectly independent line, so I thought it wise, while refraining from giving any help to Zubatoff or his agents, not to advertise what I was going to do in the future.

At the house of Zubatoff's friend I met several persons who have played a prominent

part in the political movement of the last two years. One of them was Miss Manya Vilbushevitch, and another Dr. Shayevitch, who were then, under the patronage of Zubatoff, laying the foundation of a so-called Independent Labour Party in South Russia on the same lines as the Moscow association. I should say of these two, however, that in spite of their connection with these police agents, I suspected they had real revolutionary sympathies, and had ulterior purposes in joining Zubatoff. There was also Mikhail Gurovitch, a tall, dark gentleman, who, as I learned afterwards, was intimate with many liberals and revolutionists, and was the means of getting many of them sent to prison or to Siberia. "This is our great friend and co-worker," said Zubatoff, introducing Gurovitch to me. There were also several teachers and professors who lectured to the future Workmen's Association of St. Petersburg. They all protested that there were honest men even among the police, and that it was by their help that the labouring classes could be best influenced. "The workman will, in the future, appreciate the services of Zubatoff," one of them said to me, "and the time will come when they will erect a memorial to him." I kept silence, admiring the appearance of sincerity with which they spoke, and reflecting how easily a simple man might be

deceived by such means as these. To do justice to the professors, I must mention that some of them expressed their doubts whether it was a proper thing for honest men to lecture in meetings held under the patronage of the police. There was also Dr. Shapiro, one of the leaders of the Zionist movement. Zubatoff apparently gave material help to all these persons, and I summarized his policy in the ancient formula, *Divide et impera.* He was evidently attempting to organize the Jewish workmen under the flag of Zionism, and trying to detach them from the Revolutionary Party, while he was enlisting the Christian workmen under the pretence of a struggle for economic concessions, in order to separate them also from political action. This showed, indeed, that he was a man of considerable intelligence; and, believing as I did that organization was the first essential for the future of the masses, I could not but admire the ingenuity and boldness with which he had gone to work.

Then, for the first time, there arose in my mind the question whether it might not be possible, by pretending adherence to Zubatoff's policy, to attain my own end of a genuine working-class organization. But I was very much afraid of besmearing myself; and therefore, when they asked me for my formal

adherence, I answered that I still wished to think the matter over.

The more I became acquainted with the leaders of the Zubatoff movement, the more clearly I saw the close relation between the clergy and the Political Police. I was invited to meet Mr. Skvortzoff, a man famous for his animosity to the Russian Nonconformists, editor of the *Missionary Review*, and an intimate friend of Pobyedonostseff and the Metropolitan Antonius. This man was absolutely unprincipled, and I soon learned that he and Pobyedonostseff were constantly exchanging the information they got about the Labour Movement with Zubatoff and the Secret Police. A similar alliance existed between Professor Filosoff-Ornatsky, a prominent cleric, and Lopukhin, M. de Plehve's assistant. I found then that the Russian *popes* are mere officials of the Political Police, but even worse than the latter, inasmuch as the police only capture the bodies of the victims, while the priests try to capture their souls; they are real enemies of the toiling and suffering classes.

At last the St. Petersburg Workmen's Association was formally established. I attended the inaugural meeting, but not in my priest's dress, so that I should not be formally associated with the service, which I had been pressed to do. The building was filled, and the Rector of the

Academy made a speech, which he began by reminding the audience of the old communal life of the early Christians. He went on to assume, however, that "social life has changed, and that the foundation of society is now private property." He, however, exhorted the workmen not to covet the riches of others, but by honest labour, sobriety, and mutual help to better their own conditions. When the audience separated, I found that the men were full of disgust, as they had expected something quite different, for many of them were already touched by revolutionary ideas.

Shortly afterwards the work of lectures and meetings began in the suburb Viborgskaya Storona, one of the workmen's quarters. I took no active part in it, but I went twice to see what was going on. During these lectures the employers, and especially the Government, were put in the best light, and every effort was made to reconcile the workmen with the present order of things. I asked my friends of the Haven to attend and watch what was going on, and to report to me.

The spring of 1903 came, and I was very busy with preparations for the coming examinations at the Academy. I worked hard and duly passed, and wrote the essay for the Theological degree, which I successfully took. Then the question arose—what next? The rector hinted that it

would be good for me to enter a monastic order, which is the more important and favoured branch of the clergy in Russia, and holds all the highest positions. But I flatly refused, for reasons of which I have already spoken.

There was only one monk with whom I had come in contact at the Academy for whom I cared much. This was the Inspector, who was liked by all the students; but even he seemed to me a very dry and narrow-minded man. I was then very much troubled by religious doubts, but when I mentioned them he was perfectly terrified, told me that I was tempted by the devil, and advised me to read the lives of the Saints. At another time I was in great need of some money, and asked the Inspector to lend me some, as I knew he could do so. "Well, you see," he explained in embarrassment, "I must first ask my confessor; he told me that I should not lend money to any one on any account." I was indignant, for this confessor was an ignorant priest of much lower position and abilities than the Inspector himself. I wondered what would happen if a human life depended upon such help. Would Christ have refused on such a pretext to help his neighbour? So I wrote to the Inspector in this sense. Shortly after sending my letter, a servant summoned me to the Inspector's rooms; and, when I opened the door, the old man suddenly fell at my feet,

and, embracing them, begged me to forgive him, my sinful slave! Then he gave me the money.

I also frequently attended the meetings of the Religious Philosophical Society organized by Bishop Antoninus. This society existed for the free discussion of religious questions, and aimed at uniting the educated classes with the Church. The bishop seemed to be a very liberal man. But as to the clergy in general, I became more than ever convinced that they were wrapped up in ritualism and dogma, and quite unable to throw any light upon the real substance of religion. Their best representatives were constantly embarrassed by the criticisms and questions of Rosanoff, Minsky, and other speakers. The Metropolitan Antonius offered me at that time a professorship in the chief subject, the Holy Scriptures, in a provincial seminary. The position, salary, and prospects were all good, but I refused the offer, as I felt absolutely unable to limit myself to the scholastic interpretation required in such an establishment. Besides, I made up my mind to help the workmen, and therefore I decided to remain in St. Peterburg.

This was in the summer of 1903. I took a little room in the Vassili Ostroff—19, Church Street—for nine roubles (eighteen shillings) a month, and limited my expenses, apart from this rent, to ninepence or tenpence a day. I was very

much inclined to abandon the priesthood altogether, but, as I thought it would give me easier access to the workmen, I decided not to do so until I had succeeded, and I began to look for a parish in St. Petersburg.

Gradually there was ripening in my mind a plan for influencing the Workmen's Association organized by Zubatoff in such a way as to completely paralyze the efforts of the Political Police to use it as a buttress of the Autocracy, and to direct it into an altogether different channel. If I had had any faith in the genuineness of Zubatoff's intentions, it had by this time absolutely disappeared. Once he invited me to his apartments, and during our conversation a telegram was brought in, describing the general strike in the South of Russia, which had then just broken out, and which in the beginning was actually organized by his agent, Dr. Shayevitch. As he read the telegram the benevolent face of Zubatoff suddenly changed its expression, and a savage fire flashed in his eyes as he hissed, "Shoot them down, the villains!" The serpent showed at last, I thought.

My workmen friends also at this time reported to me that they had heard of three persons who had spoken at the meetings of the association being arrested. Still I decided to use Zubatoff for my own purposes. One day he invited me

to come and see him, and again asked me whether I would not help him. In particular, he wished me to write a report to M. de Witte, who was then Finance Minister, about the meetings of the association, the idea being to impress him with the value of the movement. "The report," said Zubatoff, "must be written as though the men themselves had done it. De Witte may be of great help to us, and you might show him that a professional organization of the labouring classes would be consistent with his own ideas of the policy of the State."

I agreed to write a paper of the kind, not as a member of the association, but as a private observer, basing myself upon its minutes, which were given to me for the purpose. In the course of a long conversation, Zubatoff made his own purposes quite clear. De Witte, who has been the great author of the Protectionist system in Russia, and the connected system of State regulation which has produced an enormous artificial growth of commerce and manufactures in the Empire in recent years, was entirely on the side of the employers; and Zubatoff wanted to secure his sympathy by convincing him that the employers also would benefit by an elevation of the intelligence of the workmen, and that their organization in trade unions, as had been shown in England, would be of advantage to the

capitalist, because it was easier to treat with combinations of men than with separate individuals. Of course, Zubatoff's real aim was not at all the elevation of the workmen's intelligence or their organization, but their diversion from political activity in such a way that they would remain obedient to the existing governing authorities of the Empire. He persuaded them that the police were really their friends, but had to show that he was able to obtain for them certain small concessions from the employers. In Moscow Zubatoff's interference in the relations between capital and labour had aroused great indignation among the masters, and M. de Witte had taken the side of the latter. Zubatoff was now anxious, therefore, to do away with any possibility of friction with the powerful Minister of Finance. He therefore planned that the factory inspectors, who had hitherto been under the Ministry of Finance, should be transferred to his own department, the Ministry of the Interior, so that he might use them as his own agents. The rivalry between these two ministries, with M. de Plehve at the head of the one and M. de Witte at the head of the other, was then at its height. Zubatoff belonged to the winning side, but still he thought it best, so far as possible, to overcome M. de Witte's animosity.

When our conversation ended, Zubatoff took

out of his desk two hundred roubles (twenty pounds) and offered them to me, with a friendly smile, as a fee for my work upon the report. I dared not refuse altogether to accept this money, lest I should make him suspicious; and so, saying that it was too much, I took only one hundred roubles. Before leaving, I said, "This is all very well; but why have you arrested certain workmen who were members of the Association?"

Zubatoff denied that there had been any such arrests, and when I referred to the case of the betrayal of the young school-mistress, he repeated his denial indignantly. I had, however, positive proof in that case.

The reader who is calmly considering this story in the light of the peaceful and law-abiding feelings of a citizen of a free land may wonder that I should have consented any longer to associate myself, even in so slight a way, with so dubious a venture as this, now that I began to see its real nature. But, filled as I was with disgust, the more I saw of Zubatoff's movement, the peculiar and desperate character of the position of the mass of my poor countrymen still more painfully oppressed me. The very existence of this movement shows how little Russian conditions can be judged by Western standards. In no other civilized country, I suppose, would it be possible to conceive the heads of the police,

with the patronage and authority of the most powerful Ministers of the Sovereign, deliberately undertaking to organize a labour movement, and even going so far as to organize great strikes, solely with the object of "dishing" the natural leaders of the working classes, and so keeping the industrial movement under their own control.

It was clear to me that my countrymen would never be in better conditions of life until they were organized; and it appeared to me — and this belief has been confirmed by what has since happened—that, whoever commenced that organization, it would in the end become a genuine labour movement, because the intelligent members of the working classes who had been enlisted would ultimately get the upper hand. That is why, after much anxious thought, I decided that, distasteful as it might be, I ought to take part in this beginning, and to endeavour, using Zubatoff as a tool, gradually to get the control of the organization into my own hands. By affecting to help these servants of the Autocracy I should get complete freedom in my own relations with the working men, and I should not be under the perpetual necessity of hiding my movements from police spies. It was only too evident that the declared Revolutionists would have but little influence among the masses of the people, because they always had to work secretly in small circles

of selected workmen, the body of the people remaining untouched. As a priest, on the other hand, I had a great advantage in coming closer into contact with the people. I believed that, by first organizing them for mutual help under the protection of the authorities, arranging at the same time secret societies of the best workmen, picked out for the purpose, whom I could educate and use as missionaries, I could, little by little, convert the whole organization to larger ends, until, my own men having replaced the officials of the association appointed by the police, and having won the respect and trust of the general body by their manifest honesty, I should have a group of assistants ready to lead the people when the critical moment came. I knew that, for the time being, I should be shunned by the small parties of political reformers, and should be suspected of all sorts of treachery; but my duty to the working men, whom I loved, overcame my hesitation.

I wrote the promised report, describing the gathering of workmen in peaceful meetings for the discussion of their needs, and the usefulness of workmen's organizations in the economy of the State.

Several representatives of the Workmen's Association took my report to M. de Witte, according to Zubatoff's desire. The Minister

received them, read the report through, and then calmly asked—

"Did you write this, gentlemen?"

"Yes," they answered.

"Then you ought to become journalists," M. de Witte replied; and with these words he dismissed them.

Zubatoff's plan of enlisting De Witte's help in this way failed; but, a little later on, M. de Plehve, by a series of intrigues, completely supplanted his rival in the Tsar's favour, and became omnipotent. Then came Witte's turn to ask favours of Zubatoff. He asked without much scruple, but also without result. At this time—the spring of 1903—Zubatoff's organization in St. Petersburg had not been very successful, partly because some of the factory hands in Moscow came over and told their comrades that it was a police trap, partly because some professors who had at first promised to speak to the men now refused to do so, fearing public criticism, and partly because members of the Revolutionary Party came to the meetings and put annoying questions to the speakers. All this was very unpleasant for Zubatoff; and, besides, he had a number of enemies.

On the 8th of May, 1903, five artisans whom I knew to be honest and intelligent men came to me at the Academy. One of them, Vassilieff,

marched beside me at the head of the procession on the fateful 22nd of January, 1905, and was killed at my side; the others being still alive, I am unable to mention their names. They argued with me at length to show the necessity of joining Zubatoff's organization, in order to capture it for our own use. We met again at the lodging of one of them, and after a long discussion I yielded.

There and then we organized ourselves into a Secret Committee.

I afterwards went to see Zubatoff and told him that I was ready to help him actively, but he must promise me that absolutely no arrests would be made among the members of the association, as otherwise the work would be compromised and would fail, especially in view of rumours of arrests of members in Moscow.

Zubatoff gave me his word, and I hasten to add that, so long as he was in power, it was kept.

I then proceeded to organize a group of future leaders, consisting partly of Zubatoff's men and partly of members of my own committee, and prepared them for their future work by a series of private discussions.

I do not know how long I could have succeeded in soothing Zubatoff, though, in spite of all his detective capacities and his bold policy, he was in certain ways a simpleton. At this

moment, however, Fate came to my aid and brought the reign of this great police agent to an abrupt end.

He invited me about this time to dinner at the house of a personal friend, his right-hand man in the hunting down of Revolutionists, one Melnikoff. There I was introduced to General Skandrakoff, and there were also present a number of other agents of Zubatoff, including Dr. Gurovitch and Dr. Shayevitch. The latter, during our conversation, vigorously defended the policy of getting up local strikes as a means of keeping hold of the workmen. Zubatoff did not share this opinion, but I understood that he gave his agents a free hand in certain localities; and very soon afterwards some of them put their theories into practice, and ruined their own careers, together with that of Zubatoff. One such strike was arranged in Minsk, but the police agents quickly lost control of it; and at last they were removed by the Ministry of the Interior, at the request of the local authorities and the local employers.

In Odessa things went much farther. Dr. Shayevitch, acting through the official Workmen's Association, started a small strike, but it spread like wildfire among the trades of the port; and in a few days scores of thousands of dockers and artisans had stopped work, and the city was in

a condition verging on anarchy. Dr. Shayevitch lost his presence of mind completely, refused to lead the men, and hid himself. The authorities of the city and the employers, greatly alarmed and pressed on by Zubatoff's enemies, made a search at the house of Shayevitch, and arrested him. Zubatoff tried to disavow all responsibility for this proceeding; but, unfortunately for him, a letter was found which proved his sympathy with the scheme, and this brought about his fall. Shayevitch was exiled to the northern provinces of Vologda, and Zubatoff himself was deprived of all his posts and exiled to a small town in the central provinces. What became of him I do not know, except that, thanks to the protection of General Trepoff, later on the Dictator of Russia, and the Grand Duke Sergius, Zubatoff received a rich pension.

With the disappearance of Zubatoff his St. Petersburg association remained, so to say, in the air. So when—in August, 1903—I was again approached by a deputation of five workmen, members of my Secret Committee, with the request to take the whole work into my own hands, I determined to do so; and at the end of August I proceeded to organize a workmen's society which would embody my own ideas as to the lines upon which real progress could be made toward an improvement in the condition of

the masses of the people and the attainment of national freedom.

We had already a nucleus of intelligent workmen to begin with, partly members of my Secret Committee, partly other workmen whom I had picked out during our discussions, about seventeen altogether. We hired an apartment in the Viborgskaya Storona, and arranged it as tea-rooms. A manager, elected by the men themselves for three months, was installed. He continued to work at the factory during the day-time, as the restaurant was open only from 7 p.m. to midnight, and from 2 p.m. on Sundays, and more particularly because he did not receive any pay. Only tea and mineral waters were sold, alcoholic liquors being strictly forbidden. We had for this purpose several small rooms, and a hall for meetings, which were held three times a week. On Wednesdays and Sundays we used to read and discuss books or articles on the labour question; and sometimes I addressed the members on social and economic questions. Every meeting was opened and closed with prayer. Workmen from outside were cordially invited, and they appointed one of the two men who controlled the restaurant. No doubt the strictness with which our accounts were kept helped in the rapid extension and the popularity of the society.

After a couple of months, when its soundness

was proved, I decided to put it on a more solid ground, its existence not yet being sanctioned by the Government, and so being in danger of destruction at any moment. I wrote a report to the Minister of the Interior about the use and necessity of trade organizations among the workmen, and this was presented through the then Prefect, General Kleygells, as is required by the regulations. During an interview with Kleygells I discussed the matter at length. I was also requested to see Lopukhin, Director of the Department of Police, about it. This official, a tall, gentlemanly fellow, with an intelligent face, received me in a very friendly way, and, when I told him that we had no library and were very much in need of books and papers, astonished me by asking me how much money we wanted for this purpose. Afterwards, to my disgust, I received from the Ministry of the Interior a small sum of money, about six pounds, with a strong hint that I should only subscribe to Conservative papers.

# CHAPTER IX

## FATHER JOHN, THE MIRACLE-WORKER

In the mean time I had taken my degree, had rented a small room, and was looking for some position as a priest by which I could earn my living. I had very scanty means, and spent them with the utmost care. I don't know how the Metropolitan Antonius heard about it, but on the eve of Christmas in that year a messenger brought me a little packet from him, containing a hundred roubles (about ten pounds), as a Christmas present. The next day I went to thank him for his kindness, and he then offered me a vacant position as chaplain in the Central Prison (*Peresilnaya Tiurma*). I sent in the necessary application, and a few days later was informed that, out of many candidates, I had been selected.

We called our society (avoiding that word lest it should excite suspicion) the Gathering (*Sobranye*) of Russian Factory Hands of St. Petersburg. Its stated aims were to strengthen in the Russian workman the national self-consciousness,

and to develop his intelligence and his capacity for self-help. As means to these ends, the association would organize tea clubs, educational circles, lectures on industrial and general subjects, and groups for co-operative production and distribution; sick, accident, and out-of-work benefit following as soon as possible.

At the beginning of November all the men who had been formerly employed by Zubatoff were unanimously excluded from the society and forbidden to enter the premises. On the 9th of that month, with seventeen members of the responsible circle, I went to General Kleygells to present the rules; and I afterwards often visited the Department of Police to help their passage through the interminable process of bureaucratic sanction. In ordinary cases this process often lasts a couple of years or more, but our constitution came out of the mill after only three months—alas! in a much mutilated condition. The form of our inaugural meeting was then considered, and an old man, whom we called Grandfather Jacob, proposed that Father John of Cronstadt should be invited to lead a solemn service. But this was strongly opposed by the great majority of members, who objected to Father John's miracle-working.

I may interject here a few words as to my several meetings with this remarkable priest. His habit of distributing large sums of money in the

streets attracted to Cronstadt a whole population of beggars, who lived in complete laziness, looking only for charity, and losing more and more the habits of honest work. The first time I met him was at the blessing of the new Church of the Olga Refuge. Father John had been invited to lead the service, together with myself and another priest. I closely studied his face. He is a man of rather short stature, short grey beard, keen eyes, abrupt and nervous manners, and nonchalant to a degree. He was dressed in most beautiful priest's garments. Before the opening of the service a general, covered with decorations, came into the church, and I observed that Father John was a very watchful and practical man.

Next time I met him at the house of a merchant, where a service was to be held. He was preceded by one of a band of twelve lady acolytes dressed in white, whose movements reminded me more of a clown than of a sincere worshipper. Afterwards we were invited to take refreshment, and Father John and I sat down at table, while a crowd of visitors kneeled around us. The priest ate and drank with great gusto, and without any ceremony. I was also hungry, but my attention was soon diverted to the fact that, each time my colleague emptied the glass or plate, he filled it again and passed it to the nearest person kneeling by him, who tasted

devoutly and then passed it on. Thus Father John's plates and glasses made the round of the room. I could not but feel humiliated at this spectacle.

When the new Church of the Red Cross, of which later on I became a priest, was complete, the Duchess Lobanoff Rostovsky invited Father John and myself to attend the service. There was a third priest also, a young student of the Academy. Father John and I were afterwards invited to take refreshment, but the young student was rather pointedly left in the cold. I was so ashamed that I quietly escaped, and took the young man to my own rooms. On another occasion, however, at the Technical College of St. Petersburg, Father John impressed me very greatly, preaching *extempore* with real force and apparent sincerity. He spoke of death and resurrection, and said that every man dies and is resurrected daily, and that every immoral action fills the heart with a feeling of death, while every striving toward good fills it with the glory of the new life.

He used sometimes to visit the Academy, where the students simply adored him. I often spoke to persons from Cronstadt, well acquainted with his life; on the whole, their opinion was that his influence and his largesse were very demoralizing. His complete neglect of any radical

proposals for the betterment of the condition of the suffering and toiling masses was especially striking. He was in close relation only with the powerful, the enemies and oppressors of the people. The influence upon his work of the twelve lady assistants to whom I have referred, who were generally the wives or unmarried daughters of rich merchants, was not a good one. Each of them had her special week, during which time she really managed Father John's public life, trying to get as many rich houses as possible to solicit his visits at very high fees.

In this way his prayers became a purely commercial business, and he rarely visited the poor. I do not think it was his own fault; I believe that he is a well-intentioned man, but, being very ignorant, he has become, in the political sense of the word, a mere tool of the ruling classes. He is very susceptible to the temptations of advertisement, and, although he distributes immense sums of money, is yet very rich. His subservience is shown in his behaviour after the Kishinieff massacres. It will be remembered that, upon the impulse of the moment, he sent an appeal to the Christian population of Kishinieff, in which he strongly condemned the murder of the Jews; but later on, after being spoken to by the authorities, he sent another letter, in which he excused himself for his former reproaches and

accused the Jews of being themselves the cause and the instigators of the massacres.

It will be understood that, on the whole, I was not sorry that it should be decided not to ask Father John to take the leading part at our inaugural meeting. I then went to the Metropolitan Antonius to ask his permission for Bishop Sergius, Rector of the Ecclesiastical Academy, to do so. Though, as usual, he received me kindly, the Metropolitan not only would not give his permission, but he wanted to forbid me to accept the position of general director of the society if I should be elected to it.

"I see," he said, "that it is a part of the scheme to have musical evenings with dancing. How can you, as a priest and a member of the Church, have anything to do with such things?"

"But, your Highness," I replied, "that is just what I should expect members of the Church to do. A servant of Christ must show the people, not by words, but by deeds, that he is their guide. You cannot deny that the life of our workmen is terrible: they have no joy, and therefore they take to drink. Let us give them some healthy amusement if we want to make them sober and moral. And we must also try to better their material conditions if we are to help them to a better life. In helping the people to help themselves the Church also has a great task. I must

say frankly that if the Church will not go into the homes of the people, the shepherd will, sooner or later, be without sheep. Already nearly the whole of the educated class—those who have influence with the people—have left the Church; and if we do not help the masses now, they also will leave us."

The Metropolitan looked rather shaken, but spoke of the danger to the Church of its becoming vulgarized by mixing in political and social struggles. "Christ," he said, "tried to transform the souls of men, and our concern also is with the inner life of the people."

I felt much vexed by this remark, and asked, if this were so, why the priests did not say to the rich what he wished us to say to the poor?

However, he was immovable. I was the more disappointed because I was fond of the old ecclesiastic, and had thought him capable of becoming a pioneer, instead of which I now found him to be only a timid diplomat. But my workmen were very well pleased, evidently not wanting any further mixture of the priesthood in their affairs, save for myself. Later on, when we discussed the question of a design for our official seal, and I suggested that a small cross should be included in it, they objected, until I explained that the cross was a symbol of self-sacrifice.

On April 11, 1904, the opening ceremony

of the St. Petersburg Factory Workers' Society took place. About one hundred and fifty persons were present, and after various speeches by the workmen and myself there were music and dancing. I now looked with anxiety to the immediate future, but my fears were soon relieved. On the first evening seventy-three members joined and paid their subscriptions, and at the end of the first month there were three hundred members. In spite of repeated refusals, I was elected general director.

At last I had firm ground under my feet for the development of my plans. I gave myself wholly to the organization and extension of the society, being present at all its meetings and forming numerous circles of workmen for the study of history and industrial and political questions. A few University men helped me in this latter work. Great care was taken that the working of the restaurant and the management of the subscriptions should be efficient and above suspicion, while at the same time it should be in the hands of the men themselves.

I had often to go to the managers of the factories and workshops to ask for some improvement in the conditions of labour, to smooth over some undesirable conflict, to find work for unemployed hands, or to get some unfortunate man reinstated. More than once it happened to me

to be treated very roughly by employers who did not like such intervention. My little rooms in Church Street were filled morning and night, and sometimes far past midnight, by workmen and their wives or relations, some of whom came to discuss our movement, others to obtain help in their difficulties, and yet others to bring complaints against their husbands or fathers, which I had to try to settle. There was hardly a moment of peace, and yet this was the happiest time of my life.

The best day of all was Saturday, when the members of my Secret Committee, together with some other trusted workmen, gathered in my tiny rooms to talk over our common business. The men threw off their coats, and I took off my cassock, and at times the air became terribly stuffy. We talked till the small hours; sometimes, indeed, some of my friends went straight from my rooms to their morning work. I felt now that life was not aimless or useless; but there was no time to think of myself. Though I received a salary of about two hundred guineas a year from the Central Prison, I spent everything on the society. My clothes were ragged, but what did that matter? The work was going on splendidly. I had given the men an assurance at the opening meeting that the foundation of our society would mark an epoch in the history of the

working-class movement in Russia; that if they threw all their energies into it, they would build up a great instrument for the salvation of themselves and their fellows. Sometimes I had to go to the new Prefect of the city, General Foulon, who had replaced General Kleygells, and solicit his influence to obtain some concession from the employers. Foulon at first looked askance at me and my society.

"It is all very well," he said, referring to the rules, "but the Revolutionists are sure to go to your meetings and speak there."

"Let them," I replied; "we have no fear of them. We are working in the broad daylight;" and I went on to say that we wanted more than the general sympathy of his Excellency. We wanted him to feel assured that if any men formerly suspected by the police were now found in our managing committee, it would be because they understood at last that they had better rely on lawful action. Foulon was a simple-minded and kind-hearted man, and was not a policeman by nature or by his former career. He had served in a military post in Warsaw, and got on so well with the Poles there that—this is quite characteristic—he was promptly promoted to the capital. To clinch the matter, I asked General Skandrankoff to support me with Foulon, and the police agent Gurovitch also did so. Foulon

gradually became more favourably disposed, and I at last obtained from him a promise that no workmen of my society should be arrested, since such arrests would have destroyed all faith in it, and so have forced me to abandon the whole work. How important Foulon's support was to me during the critical events of the next few months will presently be seen.

All this time I was fulfilling my duties at the Central Prison, situated not far from the Cossacks' barracks. In this gaol the prisoners usually live in large common cells, not separately, as it serves as a halting-place for those condemned to exile in Siberia, or those expelled from the capital to their native or other places in Russia. Political prisoners were there rather an exception. The governor was an excellent and intelligent man of German origin. Thanks to his humane treatment of the prisoners, perfect order was easily maintained. Organized trades were carried on, the prisoners having a certain percentage of their earnings kept for them till they left. The former chaplain of the prison had arranged meetings of the prisoners of a religious character, but without much success. I continued and extended this work, giving the prisoners an opportunity of discussing some of the questions raised, and introduced a magic lantern to give an added interest. A magic lantern in a Russian prison! the reader

may exclaim with astonishment. But, indeed, there are kind-hearted men even among the Tsar's gaolers; and the characteristic of the Russian penal system is rather universal laxity, arbitrariness, and illegality than universal cruelty. The prisoners became immensely interested in our readings and discussions. There were among them not only various kinds of Christians, but also Mohammedans and Jews. I remember that once not one of the Christians could explain a passage from the Gospel which had been read. At last a little pale-faced Jew rose and explained it in a clear and simple way. I asked them why this should be so, and one of them replied, "The priests teach us badly." Many of them, I knew, were guilty of terrible crimes; but many also were completely innocent, and some had been imprisoned by sheer mistake. Even among the rougher criminals, I found in nearly all some spark of goodness; for their crimes, the abnormal conditions of life were more responsible than their own wills.

# CHAPTER X

## THE ASSASSINATION OF PLEHVE

SATURDAYS, Sundays, and Mondays I passed partly in the prison and partly at my society, and the other days of each week I devoted entirely to the society. In May, 1904, I sent some of my most trusted workmen to the Putiloff Works, as I thought it was now time to attempt to organize the compact mass of its thirteen thousand hands. At the end of that month fifty men from these works came to our meeting, and asked me to organize a similar society among them. This I did. It was the first branch of the mother society. I became chairman of it, giving up the chairmanship of the original society.

Without delay we took a large house outside the Narva Gate, in which there was a hall capable of seating two thousand persons; and, to my satisfaction, General Foulon accepted my invitation to be present at the opening meeting. We sat round a broad table, myself at the head and

the Prefect on my right hand; and after I had said a few words, in the course of which I pointed out that we must not forget that the Government had allowed our organization and our meetings, the General accepted my request to make a short address. Speaking in an abrupt military fashion, he said: "I am happy to see you together in this friendly and intelligent meeting. I am a soldier. Just now our country is passing through a trying period, through a war with a far distant and cunning enemy. To pass through this crisis victoriously the whole Russian nation must unite and give up all its strength for the country. In union is force." This little harangue was greeted with a thunder of applause, which pleased Foulon immensely, and he left the meeting in very high spirits. On future occasions when he was invited to attend the opening of our new branches, he repeated the same speech verbatim. On his leaving, I took up his concluding sentence, and spoke with as much force as I could about the necessity of the union of all the workers.

At the end of June, 1904, there were already seven hundred members of the Putiloff branch. My lieutenants had found out all the most influential men of the various workshops, with the object of drawing them into the society. There already existed at those works a so-called

co-operative society, under the control of the directors and managers, who extracted great profits from it by selling bad and dear goods, and by getting the workmen into debt and so tying them to their shops. It was, in fact, a thinly veiled truck system. I explained to our members that this business must be taken into their own hands; and this aim became one of our most popular objects. Revolutionists, especially students, used often to come to our meetings, hoping to break up the society, and to win over the workmen to their own circles. I gave them free access, finding that their arguments increased the interest of our debates, while our best members easily replied to them.

About this time I was summoned to the office of the Political Police, and offered a large sum of money for the purposes of the society. It was very grievous to me to accept any of it, but in order to divert suspicion I took four hundred roubles (about £40), entering it in our books as an anonymous gift. I heard later on that the Russian Ambassador in France reproached me for having taken money from the Government and then used it against them. He evidently forgot that this money had been taken from the pockets of the people, and that I did but return it to its owners.

One day in June, 1904, I received a letter from

General Skandrakoff, in which he informed me that the Moscow society, founded by Zubatoff, which was now under the special direction of General Trepoff and the Grand Duke Sergius, was greatly interested in my work, and that the editor of the semi-official and reactionary *Moscow Gazette* (*Moscovsky Vyedomosti*), Gringmuth, was now in St. Petersburg, and wished to meet me. I was warned to take care what I said to him; and this tall old man, with the soft manners, certainly struck me as a cunning and perfidious person. This, however, did not prevent me, in the course of our conversation, from observing, half in fun and half seriously, that, if he wished to make a success of the Moscow society, all the agents of the police in it ought to be at once expelled, and one of my own workmen might be put at the head of it instead. Gringmuth invited me to visit him in Moscow; and, indeed, I had practically decided at this time to attempt to organize societies similar to my own in Moscow and other of the great industrial centres in the empire, from which requests to undertake such an enterprise were now frequently reaching me. I left for Moscow in July; but before doing so General Foulon told me, in the name of M. de Plehve, that I had better be careful in regard to the Moscow society, and not interfere with it. Evidently, Gringmuth had already denounced me,

and Plehve was afraid to quarrel with the Grand Duke Sergius.

Within a few days of this, the all-powerful Minister of the Interior was assassinated in the streets of St. Petersburg by a member of the Militant Organization of the Revolutionary Socialist party. Plehve had been very much interested in my work. A friend of mine once heard him say, "I do not think the Revolutionists of any importance. There is nothing to fear from them. What I fear is the Labour Movement. As yet we have two kinds of labour organizations—that of Zubatoff, which is entirely in the hands of the police, and that of Gapon, which carefully shuns the police. I do not yet know what their real merits will prove to be."

What would have happened had Plehve survived it is difficult to say. He had been successful for twenty years in repressing every symptom of free life in the Russian people, and in punishing those who would have given my country liberty; and yet, with all his success and all his talent of coercion and corruption, the movement of protest and of liberation has steadily grown, until it has at last reached the explosive point. Certainly it was very much more easy for me to deal with the amiable Prefect, but our genuine labour organization in St. Petersburg was now firmly founded, and

even had Plehve lived, the crisis must soon have come.

I visited Moscow, Kharkov, Kiëv, Poltava, and several other towns. I soon found that in Moscow the authorities had been warned, and that there was no chance of my doing anything; but while I was in the city I attended one meeting of the Zubatoff society, and spoke strongly against the interference of the police in such a movement. I also visited Gringmuth, and met the renegade Revolutionist, Tikhomiroff, who produced a very pitiful impression upon me. From what I saw in Kiëv and Kharkov, it was clearly advisable to make quite sure of the solidity of the St. Petersburg association before expending time and energy on work in the provinces.

Before returning I passed some time in my father's village; and as my finances, thanks to the expenses of the St. Petersburg association, were much strained, and I needed money also to get a governess for my two little children, I asked my father to mortgage his home and land. This he did, raising a sum of seven hundred and fifty roubles (seventy-five pounds), which he lent to me.

It was at this moment that the telegraph apprised us of the assassination of M. de Plehve, on July 28, 1904. I, personally, felt rather sorry for the fate of the statesman, whom I had

FATHER GAPON IN PRIEST'S ROBES.

[*To face p.* 128.

hoped to induce to give us Government help in a scheme to enable the working men of the capital to purchase their own houses. I had, also, some respect for Plehve for the strong will and energy which he exhibited, and the intelligence with which he was endowed. The persons to whom I spoke on the matter seemed completely indifferent, though some of them regretted that a great Minister should be cruelly killed. At the moment it did not appear likely that the assassination would bring any change in the policy of the Government.

However, I cut short my holiday and returned at once to the capital. Some members of my Secret Committee wrote that dissension had broken out between the leaders of different sections of the association. It appeared, also, that the Grand Duke Sergius had written to Plehve, strongly denouncing me. Luckily the denunciation came too late. Plehve was dead; the Prefect, General Foulon, was ill, and when he recovered the situation had changed so much that the matter was forgotten, and I had no difficulty in retaining Foulon's friendship.

To restore peace among the members of the association, and to increase its prestige, I arranged a grand meeting on August 19, 1904, in the Pavloff Hall, which is one of the most fashionable assembly rooms in St. Petersburg. The workmen

came in crowds, with their wives and children, two thousand in all. I had invited some known artists to sing and play, and by this time we had a flute band. But, first of all, a number of speeches were delivered on the work of the association; and we placed upon a table on the platform all the ledgers, so that every one might test for himself the honesty and efficiency of the management. General Foulon again visited us, making his way to the platform through a lane of cheering workmen. I knew I could now count upon him. The men and women were no less pleased, for it was the first time in their lives that they had been allowed to enjoy a concert and meeting of an organization of their own in a fine hall in the centre of the city.

From all parts of the capital there now came requests for the opening of new branches; and, although we had to proceed cautiously, partly for financial reasons, we had in October nine branches, with five thousand paying members, and in the following month eleven branches, with seven thousand members. Two months later, when the general strike began, we had more than twenty thousand members; and, if our existence had been prolonged a few months further without interference, we should probably have enlisted practically the whole working-class population of St. Petersburg.

Let it be remembered that this was the only substantial labour organization in the country. We rented a large house for each new branch, and I should find it hard indeed to describe the pleasure which the men and their families took in gathering at these centres after the day's work was done. At first the women had been rather opposed to the association, because the men were so enthusiastic about it that they would spend all their time working for it. But presently we arranged that each branch should have one day in the week devoted to women's meetings, and this proved a great success.

An unpleasant incident happened at the opening of the Kolomna branch. General Foulon, who had become more and more interested, sent a photographer to take a picture of the gathering, at which he and I myself attended. I felt extremely reluctant to figure in it, as I then already anticipated a time when trouble would arise, and the police might be only too glad to have such a photograph. However, it seemed better not to suggest suspicions at this point.

After I had blessed the new building with holy water, the workmen began the usual ceremony of kissing the cross; and then some of the less enlightened among them proceeded to kiss Foulon's hands, which made me and some of my lieutenants very indignant. For the first time

I could not refrain from showing what I felt. When Foulon left I made a strong speech to the men, telling them the story of Dives and Lazarus. In this world, I said, there exists a body of rich and another of poor, which are not at all friendly with each other. Foulon was on the side of the rich, and in his heart could not care a bit for the fate of the poor; and if he gave some trifling concessions, it was only as Dives in the Gospel gave the crumbs from his table to Lazarus. Then I added a few words about the need of preserving one's dignity and manliness.

The branches were now vying with each other in working for the success of the movement, and for the first time we invited Finns, Poles, and Jews to join us. From its sixth month the association had begun to give regular benefit pay, and we had also organized co-operative centres, where we sold such articles as sugar and tea. The war in Manchuria had dragged on for nearly a year, but had not affected us, so far, as much as some towns in the southern, central, and eastern provinces. At first the workmen, though not showing much interest in the campaign, were to some degree sympathetic with the Russian cause, wishing success for our arms, and some of them being even ready to volunteer for the front. "The Japoshki (little Japs) will surely be soon beaten," they used to say sneeringly. But very

soon their attitude changed. The story of the ball at which the Port Arthur officers danced, while the Japs were preparing their first torpedo attack on the imprisoned fleet, leaked out, and provoked much indignation; and later on, when all the abuses, corruption, and inefficiency in both army and navy became known, and when defeat after defeat rewarded the Russian troops for their self-sacrifice, the men began to hate the war, and to criticize more and more boldly the administration responsible for it. I did my best to enlighten them on the subject, and they laughed scornfully at the wonderful icons when Kuropatkin left for the front.

A much greater influence is to be found in that temporary change in the attitude of the Government and the educated class toward each other which has been called the political spring-time of Russia, and which began with the succession of Prince Sviatopolk Mirski to the old post of Plehve. Plehve's death struck a mortal blow at the bureaucratic system; and, for the moment, the Government, thoroughly frightened, had not the courage to attempt to suppress the many demonstrations of progressive opinion which immediately followed. This was the great opportunity which I had needed. As soon as a little more liberty of speech and meeting was conceded, I invited students and

other educated people to deliver lectures at all our branches on political questions, such as the different forms of Government, so as to prepare the thousands of workpeople, upon whom we had now an increasing influence, for the crisis in the national life which was evidently coming. I tried to get into communication with the Social Democrats and the Revolutionary Socialists, so that, in case of necessity, we could all work together; but they held aloof, still being suspicious of my organization, because of Foulon's favourable attitude toward it.

Meanwhile, the great conference of the *Zemstvos* took place in November, and was followed by the petition of the Russian barristers for a grant of law and liberty. I could not but feel that the day when freedom would be wrested from the hands of our old oppressors was near, and at the same time I was terribly afraid that, for lack of support on the side of the masses, the effort might fail. I had a meeting with several intellectual Liberals, and asked their opinion as to what the workmen could do to help the liberation movement. They advised that we also should draft a petition and present it to the Government. But I did not think that such a petition would be of much value unless it were accompanied by a large industrial strike. At that time I still believed in the good intentions of the Tsar,

being under the influence of what the Princess Narishkin had told me. Certain popular constitutional rights seemed absolutely necessary. I imagined the Tsar to be very kind-hearted and noble, and thought that if an appeal could be made directly to him he would grant these rights. From the very beginning—eight months before—I had expressed my feeling as to such demands to the members of my Secret Committee.

I now gathered in my little rooms thirty-two men whose minds were already prepared, and read and discussed with them a programme which we called the Tsar's Charter. Considering how recently it had begun, how rapidly the movement had grown, and how suddenly the new public opportunity had been sprung upon us, it was a great advance that we should be thoroughly united and enthusiastic in regard to this programme. We took the matter, indeed, in very solemn earnest, administering beforehand an oath of complete secrecy to every one present. It was also agreed that, if any of our members were arrested and their liberation was refused, we should support our request by organizing a strike.

Meanwhile the factory and mill owners had become alarmed at the rapid development of our society and the independent attitude of its members; and, afraid of the growing force of the

Workmen's Association, they decided to follow Zubatoff's example, and call in some of his old agents to establish an official association to rival our own. But, though the masters patronized the members of this sham body by giving them promotion at their works and so on, it did not show any signs of successful development, owing to the thorough distrust of the workers. The public demand for reform was now developing with startling rapidity, but it still seemed to me necessary that our labour petition should not be presented until a critical moment had arrived—such, for instance, as would be occasioned by the fall of Port Arthur, or, better still, by the defeat of Roshdestvensky's squadron, which seemed inevitable; and even then it would need behind it an effective show of united support by the working classes.

At the beginning of December I brought together all the chairmen of branches of our society to consult as to how this larger agitation could be procured. The little handful of freedom-loving men who had hitherto maintained the demand for liberty were, I said, like a small boat wandering on a stormy sea—they would inevitably come to ruin unless the body of the working men hurried to their help. It was necessary, too, that their programme of reforms should be supplemented and modified if they were really

to meet the needs of the labouring masses; and then I expressed my view that the Government would only take us seriously if we were prepared to support our representations by threatening them with a general strike of all the workers in St. Petersburg. This opinion was generally shared, and a suitable propaganda was at once undertaken.

# CHAPTER XI

## THE BEGINNING OF THE CRISIS

It did not then seem that there was any immediate hurry, but events forced us forward unexpectedly. The employers themselves provoked the crisis.

The society was strongest, and its members were most enlightened and intelligent, at the great Putiloff Ironworks, where some thirteen thousand workmen are employed. This is considered as the first arms factory in Russia—chiefly making cannon of large calibre and machine guns —and I believe there are only two more important in the world, those of Armstrong and of Krupp. It may be interesting, therefore, to say a few words upon the condition of labour at those works and generally in St. Petersburg.

The works are divided into eighteen or twenty branches, with numerous workshops. From a distance the sky seems to be blackened with the smoke of the chimneys, and on entering you are deafened with the noise of the machinery.

The situation of the hands is comparatively better than in the textile mills of the city, and metal workers generally receive better wages than the spinners and weavers. Unlike so many Russian factories, the men do not here live in barracks attached to their place of employment, but separately in the large suburb surrounding the works. In most cases a man rents a room for himself, his wife, and children, who are often numerous; but large numbers of the men can only rent a portion of a room, so that several families are often found crowded together in a single apartment. The foremen and their assistants receive better salaries and live in comparative comfort.

We take a step downwards when we pass to the condition of the cotton operatives. They receive miserable wages, and generally live in an overcrowded state, very commonly in special lodging houses. A woman takes several rooms in her own name, subletting each one; and it is common to see ten or even more persons living in one room, and three or four sleeping in one bed, often indiscriminately, men and women. It is easy to imagine the terrible degradation and depravity thus fostered.

The normal working day, according to the law of 1897 (passed after the great strike of 1896–97) is eleven hours and a half of work,

exclusive of meal times. But, by circulars of the Ministry of Finance, the manufacturers have received permission to work overtime, so that the average day is much longer than nominally allowed by law—fourteen or fifteen hours. I often watched the crowds of poorly clad and emaciated figures of men and girls returning from the mills. It was a heartrending sight. The grey faces seemed dead, or relieved only by eyes blazing with the rage of desperate revolt. Why do they agree to work overtime? They have to do so because they are paid by piece and the rate is very low. Returning home exhausted and resentful after his long day's labour, the workman sees the sad faces of his wife and his hungry children in their squalid corner where they are packed like herrings. What wonder that, to forget the hopelessness of his lot, he carries some of his small earnings to the public-house and spends them on vodka! If he does not become an habitual drunkard, it must often be because he has not the money.

After fifteen or twenty years, and often less, of such a life, even if they have not succumbed to accident or illness, men and women lose all their vitality and capacity for strenuous labour. Then they lose their places in the mill. Crowds of such unemployed are to be seen at the factory gates in the early morning. There they stand

and wait until the foreman comes out to engage a few, if there be any vacant places. Badly clad and underfed, waiting in the terrible frosty mornings of the St. Petersburg winter, they present a sight that makes one shudder—an awful picture of the imperfections of our social system. Even in this instance corruption plays a disgusting part, only those of the eagerly waiting crowd being selected able to pay a bribe to the gate-keeper or the policemen, who are confederates of the foremen and share their bribes.

These step-children of our society in St. Petersburg already well understood the injustice of their situation and the unchristian relations of capital and labour. How could it be otherwise, when they saw young girls, as well as men, daily stripped and searched at the factories by male overseers before starting work—a custom which obtains generally in Russia? The difficulty of obtaining work is increased by the lack of any labour registries. Many a time a helpless workman would come to my lodgings to say, "I have worked for twenty years at the same place, and now I am dismissed. I have no home in my native village, and our land has passed into other hands. I feel that I am lost, and that I shall perish, and my poor children too."

How little is necessary to bring comfort to these suffering souls! One kind word, and their

faces will shine with thankfulness and hope. Truly, there is a large opportunity here for the servants of the Church. Alas! they do little beyond preaching sobriety and resignation. What increases the bitterness of the men is their complete lack of any rights, personal or public. Every one in the factory representing the masters, from the director down to the lowest foreman or overseer, may dismiss any workman when he likes, and there is no appeal. Every person in a superior position has a power of limitless oppression. It is the state of outlawry thus produced which explains the large increase of hooliganism in Russian towns in late years.

To some extent my society became a protector of the men, who saw in it a means of standing up for their rights. They had learned to look to us in small things, and they had turned to us in what rapidly developed into the gravest industrial crisis in the history of the country.

At the end of December, 1904, four workmen were dismissed, of whom two had been occupied there for about a score of years and the other two for about seven years, without any plausible reason, and evidently only because they were all members of our society. They were simply told by the administration one day that they might go, it being added, "No doubt your society will keep you." For about a fortnight I did not

interfere directly in the matter, hoping that the men would be taken back, as every effort was being made to influence the administration of the factory inspectors. When these efforts failed, I decided that it was the duty of the society to espouse the cause of these men, and to stand up for them to the end, whatever might come. If we abandoned them to their fate the authority of the society would be shaken, possibly fatally, and similar arbitrary action would be encouraged; while, on the other hand, if we succeeded in obtaining their reinstatement, our prestige in the eyes of the labouring population would be tremendously increased.

At first I directed the dismissed men themselves to go to Smirnoff, the manager of the works, and to the factory inspector; but they had no success. On January 1, 1905 (December 19 Old Style), I summoned twenty delegates from each branch of the society to a meeting on the subject. At the same time the revolutionary parties were invited to send delegates, and this was the first time they were formally invited and attended our meetings. The meeting had, besides, to discuss certain changes in the constitution of the society, including a change of name to "The General Russian Workmen's Association," the establishment of a newspaper, and the opening of branches in other towns. About three hundred

men came, and with them the correspondents of several newspapers. All the business proposals were accepted, and I was instructed to have them confirmed by the Government. A regular inquiry was then held into the case of the dismissed workmen, witnesses being called and questioned; and the result was to establish the fact that the men had been unjustifiably dismissed. A resolution was unanimously accepted, being proposed by myself from the chair, to inform the Government, through the Prefect of St. Petersburg: "1. That the relations of capital and labour in Russia were abnormal, this being especially seen in the arbitrary power which foremen have over the hands. 2. To request from the administration of the Putiloff Works that the foreman Tetievkin should be immediately dismissed, he being the chief cause of the dismissal of the men, and being constantly guilty of unjust acts. 3. That the four workmen, dismissed for being members of the society, should be immediately reinstated. 4. To inform the Prefect and factory inspectors of the circumstances, and to ask them to use their influence that such acts should not be repeated. 5. That if these, the lawful requests of the men, be not satisfied, the society cannot be held responsible for any breach of the peace in the capital."

The men were made thoroughly to understand

the importance of the step they were taking. I told them plainly that if they decided to stand by their comrades, they must do so at any cost, and must be ready to bear all the sacrifices such a step might entail. A loud clamour of applause was the answer to my challenge. The enthusiasm of the men was obvious and unanswerable. I told them that upon their fortitude and determination in this matter depended the existence of the society, and that if we failed I should resign my position and abandon the movement. I asked them to swear that they would stand fast, and they did so. That may sound melodramatic, but it must be remembered that such an enterprise had never before been openly organized in Russia. At the end of the meeting three deputations of seven or nine members each were elected to be sent, the one to the director Smirnoff, another to the chief factory inspector, Tchejoff, and the third to General Foulon, the Prefect. I was authorized to choose the members of these deputations, and I did so on the spot, deciding to head the deputation to Foulon myself.

Next morning we started on our three errands. Smirnoff received our delegates, who were headed by my friend Vassilieff, very rudely, shouting at them in such a way that they left without having any proper conversation. The chief factory inspector was equally unsympathetic, until the

delegates said that they would publish his refusal to hear them in the newspapers. Then he said he would receive the complainants themselves, but not any delegates.

General Foulon proved much more amenable. At first he wished to see me alone, and he received me with his usual kindness. I told him how serious a matter it was. "The workmen have decided to support their comrades at any price. The four dismissed men have been treated with great injustice. The men have accepted unanimously a resolution which, you will see, is moderately expressed; and, personally, I fully support their demands." I said this to show that it was necessary to make the Government realize that they had a grave choice before them. In industrial affairs in Russia the Government has always to be reckoned with, but in this case peculiarly, because the Putiloff Works, like many other factories and mills, exist chiefly to carry out Government orders. By threatening to reduce those orders they had an easy means of compelling the masters to make concessions; but, apart from that, the powerful head of this military bureaucracy at that time, to whom I was speaking, could always coerce the masters if it seemed desirable. True, it was nearly always the opposite that had happened. During the conflicts of labour and capital the masters were

often willing to make concessions, but the Government, fearing that this would lead to still larger demands and to strikes on a larger scale, forbade them to do so; and thus, as the employers themselves more than once acknowledged in their professional meetings and once in a petition to the Minister of Finance, they were hindered by coercive interference from carrying on the peaceful development of national industry.

Foulon looked carefully through the resolutions, and when he reached the fifth point, exclaimed in astonishment, "But this is pure revolution; you are threatening the peace of the capital."

"Not at all," I replied, in a reassuring tone; "we do not think of any threats. My men simply want to support their comrades. You have said that you would help them in their difficulties, and this is the opportunity. If they abandoned their fellows, the people would say that this was only a sham society, intended to squeeze contributions out of the poor, and to keep them quiet. The whole of the labouring population of the capital are watching indignantly, and if our demands be not conceded, the peace of the city will certainly be threatened. I entreat you to see the deputation, and judge for yourself how much in earnest they are."

The Prefect listened attentively, and, evidently moved by my appeal, received the delegates. The nine men one after another supported my statement, taking up different points; and in the end Foulon promised to do his best to obtain satisfaction of our demands.

This result we reported to a meeting of the chairmen of the different branches on the same evening, and they in return reported to their members. We then decided that, if necessary, a strike should be declared, that it should begin at the Putiloff Works, and that, if in two days the concessions were not obtained, the strike should be gradually extended from factory to factory and from workshop to workshop. In case the negotiations should fail, we at once commenced preparations for this eventuality, instructing the men to save what money they could during the coming holidays.

On the morning of January 3 (December 21) I went with the four dismissed workmen to the chief factory inspector. I pointed out to him how serious a matter it would be if the feeling spread that the factory inspectors, who under the Russian law are supposed to occupy a sort of judicial position between masters and men, always favoured the employers. I spoke strongly, but without saying anything that could be considered unlawful, and we separated in a

friendly way. The inspector, however, at once denounced me to General Foulon. After a further interview with Foulon, it became evident that there remained nothing but to throw the last stake. I hoped, indeed, that a strike in the Putiloff Works would quickly compel the directors to yield, because I knew that at that time they were finishing some extremely important orders for the Government. That evening the men decided in favour of a strike.

It was at this juncture that the news of the surrender of Port Arthur was received. It provoked great indignation among the mass of the people, and the determination to go on with the movement became stronger than ever. Some of the more influential of the Putiloff workmen, whom I gathered together and asked whether they could stop the whole of the works, answered with an emphatic affirmative.

The next three days brought some relaxation. It was the Russian Christmas holiday (December 25 to 27, Old Style). We arranged Christmas trees in the halls of each of our branches, and more than five thousand children enjoyed this entertainment. Members had the right to bring not only their own children, but also the orphans or waifs, of whom there are so many in St. Petersburg, and every one received some small present, the orphan children getting pieces of

clothing. During the evenings we entertained the men and their wives, and many thousands passed through our halls, where there was continuous speech-making, in which the dismissed workmen figured prominently.

I was full of anxiety, feeling that our society was on the brink of a precipice. If we were forced to have recourse to a general strike, we must at least make it an event of national importance and give it a political character. The fall of Port Arthur provided us with a good pretext. I again gathered together my thirty-two lieutenants, and told them that I thought the time had now come for the presentation of a labour petition to the Tsar. They agreed, and were told to begin an agitation for a general strike, I promising to have a petition ready when the moment came. With every day the enthusiasm of the men grew stronger. On the eve of the Russian New Year I went for the last time to the director Smirnoff, and talked to him for three hours in the hope of avoiding the need of a strike, but without avail. At the Central Prison I still continued my work, both the prisoners and the authorities being much interested. I had to take part in the opening of a new prison at Tsarskoye Selo, and I also received an important invitation to take part in a mass in the Central Department of Prisons on

January 20; but, when that time came, the strike was in full swing, and I was politely informed that the festival was adjourned.

On January 14 it had been decided, on my own proposition, that the strike at the Putiloff Works should begin on the following day. It was arranged that first one workshop should stop and the men therefrom should pass in procession through the other parts of the establishment, which would then throw down their tools. Everything happened as we had arranged. At the appointed hour every one of the thirteen thousand men ceased work.

The administration was naturally startled, and even frightened. The manager, Smirnoff, who was very proud of his eloquence, came out to the crowd and, addressing them, said they "had better stop this game," and choose a deputation, some of whose demands he might be able to satisfy. The men replied that they now had a new programme of demands, and that they would only send a deputation on condition that Father Gapon should be one of the delegates. Smirnoff refused to agree to this, and so his appeal failed. He could not resist the temptation to say that I was really the enemy of the men and was leading them to ruin, and this nearly led to a serious scene. A big, dark fellow of the Little Russian Cossack tribe, a smith in the factory, drew his

knife and advanced towards Smirnoff, who made off very quickly. The captain of the police also tried to persuade the men to return to work, but without success.

All this time I was sitting at home in a state of anxious excitement, wondering what had happened. At last I took a droshky and drove to the neighbourhood of the Putiloff Works. On the way I learned the news from one of the strikers, who returned with me. As we drove up to the works we saw a tremendous crowd filling the courtyards and adjoining streets. Cries of "Father George has come!" saluted me. It was impossible to get through the crowd till a way was cleared, and then I mounted a cart and began to speak to the men. All I remember is that I glorified their action, comparing them with an old oak which, after the gloom and frost of winter, is stirred into brisk movement by the breezes and sunshine of spring.

I told them that the eyes of the city were upon them. Their demand for the reinstatement of their comrades, who had been thrown out to starve with their families, was no more than justice, and yet the directors and authorities had rebuffed and threatened them with reprisals. "Have we," I asked, "or have we not, the right to defend our members?" The question was

drowned in a roar of applause. I then read over to them from a paper which I had had lithographed the demands which we proposed, in addition to that of the reinstatement of the four men. These were as follows :—

1. The prices for contract work must be arranged, not by the arbitrary decision of the directors, but by mutual agreement between the foremen and delegates of the men. 2. There should be established at the Putiloff Works a permanent committee representing employers and employed, to decide all complaints, and no man should be dismissed without the agreement of this committee. 3. An eight-hours working day. (This demand was not insisted on, but was left for legislation.) 4. The increase of the wages of women to not less than seventy copecks (1*s.* 5*d.*) per day. 5. Overtime to be abolished except by consent of the men, when it should be paid at double rates. 6. The better ventilation of the smiths' shops. 7. The increase of the pay of the labourers to not less than two shillings per day. 8. No one must be penalized for taking part in the strike. 9. The men must be paid for the period of the strike.

All the points were received with unanimous acclamation, and on my advice the list was immediately copied for circulation among all the other factories, mills, and workshops of the city.

We at once proceeded to organize a Strike Committee, decided to give strike pay indifferently to members of the society and others, and arranged for collections at the gates of the factories and at meetings. From that day onwards the influx of new members to our branches was tremendous, and we decided amongst ourselves, though it was against the rules officially sanctioned, that all the contributions should go towards the expenses of the strike. Strike pay was given not in money, but in kind. All the branches of the society bought large quantities of tea, sugar, bread, and potatoes for distribution.

# CHAPTER XII

### THE STRIKE SPREADS

Our plan was that, if in two days no satisfaction could be obtained, a strike should be declared at the Franco-Russian shipbuilding yards, and then at the Semianikoff Works, which, together, employed fourteen thousand hands. I chose these two places because I learned that at that time they were carrying out important contracts for the purposes of the war in the Far East.

On January 16 General Foulon called me by telephone. He was in a state of great perturbation. He had seen M. de Witte, who had obtained the reinstatement of one of the workmen, and two others of them had also been taken back. As there thus remained only one case, he asked me to stop the strike. I replied that it was too late. It was no longer a simple question of the reinstatement of these men. There were other demands from each of the workshops, and

I could now only advise that the Putiloff administration should arrange a conference with the branch chairmen of my society and delegates of the strikers. To guarantee the honesty of such a conference I asked him to give me his word that these delegates would not be arrested or otherwise punished, and, as it was certain that they would ask me to accompany them, that I also should be safe. This General Foulon promised very earnestly. At the same time he confessed that he was puzzled about myself, and reminded me of the denunciation which had been sent out by the Grand Duke Sergius.

"You know," he said, "that if Plehve had not been assassinated you would have been exiled from St. Petersburg before now."

I could only reply that I had told him the truth, while others had deceived him. "It is in your power to arrest me," I added, feeling that much depended on this conversation for the future of the movement. "And I tell you now that if in two days the Putiloff men have not obtained satisfaction there will be a strike in some other works, and that, if then the masters continue in their blind refusal, the whole of St. Petersburg will join in the strike. There is a tremendous amount of discontent among the labouring classes. It is at present limited to purely economic grounds. If you do not give some outlet to

this explosive feeling, there will be worse to follow. But at least do not use force. Do not bring in the Cossacks. There may be in the end a petition from the whole working class of the city to the Tsar. Do not be alarmed by it. Everything will be orderly and peaceable. The working class wish only that their voice should be heard."

At the end of our conversation, at my request, the General again gave me his word as a soldier that neither the delegates nor myself should be arrested.

The men at once and unanimously decided, however, that a partial concession could not be accepted.

On January 17 the Government made another attempt to induce me to dissuade the workmen from their action. I was summoned to the head-quarters of the Prisons Administration, the head of which, Mr. Stremouchoff, a personal friend of the then Minister of Justice, Muravieff, in the presence of the Inspector of Prisons, told me that he had been instructed to beg me to induce the men to resume work. He hinted that unless I agreed I should lose my position as chaplain in the Central Prison.

"Is that a threat?" I asked. "If so, I may say clearly that I shall act only according to my convictions."

The conversation ended abruptly by my advising them to do what they thought fit, and to leave me to do what I thought fit. On the same evening a deputation nearly one hundred strong, whom I had chosen, waited upon the director, Smirnoff, at the works. In the whole vast premises I saw only two agents of the Secret Police. After a long conversation on various subjects, Smirnoff refused all our demands. We warned him that all the responsibility lay with him, and we left the hall, followed discreetly by the spies. We went directly to a general meeting of the men, to which we reported; and it may easily be imagined with what indignation the announcement was received. The men resolved unanimously to stand to the last.

This was the end of the second day of the strike. After another short conversation with General Foulon, in the course of which he said that he could do nothing, I felt that I had done everything in my power to preserve peace, and that now there was no issue but a general strike. As I knew that once that took place my society would be suppressed by the Government, I decided to prepare the petition of which I have spoken, and to make other final preparations.

On the following morning, January 18, the Franco-Russian and Semianikoff Works struck. The men poured into our nearest branches. Any

distinction between members and outsiders disappeared, and the society became, by unspoken agreement, the representative and centre of the whole movement. I now invited the leaders of the revolutionary parties to join us in supporting the strike, feeling that any help at such a moment would be valuable. They came to the meetings, and at first the men met them with some animosity, but I used my influence and the connection was established.

The whole of that day and the next I passed in driving from one branch to another, speaking at each; and, as our halls could not hold the crowd that besieged them, they were admitted in relays, and I had to speak four and even six times at each place. On the 19th I made at least twenty, and perhaps thirty, speeches, everywhere developing the principal ideas of the programme which we had accepted in our Secret Committee on the foundation of the society; and everywhere the crowd showed that they understood the subject, seeing by the development of the conflict how political demands follow economic necessities. In the daytime the branches were like so many beehives, full of an ever-increasing excitement.

On the night of the 19th I left my home, being afraid that I might be arrested and the whole movement thus brought into disorder.

Though Foulon had given me his word of honour for my safety, I did not wish to leave anything to chance. My last visit to my home on that night will remain for ever in my memory. Several of my trusted workmen had gone there in advance to see if the police were not inside, or at least on the watch. Then, the coast being clear, I drove in. There were gathered there several writers, and also an English correspondent. I asked these friends to work out a draft of a petition to the Tsar embodying the points of our programme. None of these drafts satisfied me completely, but later on, using them, I wrote a petition which was afterwards put forward. It was then that I decided that the people must carry the petition to the Tsar.

For the last time I looked at my three little rooms, through which had passed so many of the best of the working men and women, and also so many poor and miserable creatures, and where so many passionate speeches and discussions had taken place. I looked at the big wooden cross which I had bought and kept in my bedroom, and which I loved because it always reminded me of the sacrifice of Christ for the sake of the people. I looked for the last time on the picture of "Christ in the Desert" which hung on my wall, and at the furniture made for me by my

pupils of the Refuge where I was formerly a teacher.

It was with a heart full of grief, but also of unchangeable determination, that I left my house, not to see it again.

# CHAPTER XIII

## AT THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

I PASSED the rest of the night without sleep in the room of a workman, preparing the petition. This I took in the morning to a lady who had promised to have it printed for me, returning to snatch a couple of hours' restless sleep. I was awakened by my friend, who informed me that a special messenger had come to my house and had summoned me to the Ministry of Justice. A note was also brought to me from the Metropolitan Antonius, asking me to call upon him, evidently in order to speak about the strike. Feeling that these interviews would be of no avail, I decided not to go; but on the following day, January 21, it became clear to me that the Government was preparing to take extreme measures in case we did not abandon our plans, and as another messenger came from Muravieff, I decided to go to see him, and to make a final attempt to procure a peaceful settlement. There was an undeniable

danger of arrest, which might leave the workmen without a leader at the most critical time; but this had to be risked if a tragedy was to be obviated.

I therefore arranged to go to the Ministry at noon, and in the interval decided, with the same end in view, to send a letter to the Ministry of the Interior, and another to the Tsar himself. The latter was taken directly to Tsarskoye Selo by two of my trusted lieutenants, with instructions to deliver it directly into the hands of the Tsar, if possible.

"Sire," I wrote, "I fear that your Ministers have not told you the whole truth about the state of affairs in the capital. Be assured that the workmen and the people of St. Petersburg, trusting in you, have irrevocably decided to appear to-morrow at 2 p.m. before the Winter Palace, in order to present to you a statement of their needs and those of the whole Russian people. If, hesitating in your heart, you do not show yourself to your people, and if innocent blood be shed, the moral tie which has existed between yourself and your people will be broken, and the trust which the people have in you will disappear for ever. Come, then, to-morrow with confidence before your people, and receive with an open mind our humble petition. I, the representative of the workmen, and my brave

comrades guarantee the safety of your person at the price of our lives.—G. Gapon, Priest."

I do not know whether this message was successfully delivered, as I never heard again of the two men who carried it. Probably it was delivered and they were immediately arrested. I know, however, that the similar letter to Prince Sviatopolk-Mirski safely reached its destination. This was not sent on my own responsibility alone. I gathered some of the leading workmen together and read the note over to them. They agreed upon it in substance, but the last sentence caused them hesitation. "How can we guarantee the safety of the Tsar with our own lives?" some of them asked gravely. "If some unknown person were to throw a bomb, we should then have to kill ourselves." These words show the simple and sincere spirit which actuated them. I had to use all my influence to convince them that in any case we must give such a promise. The letter was then signed by the others as well as myself; and I am sure that, if the Tsar had appeared and anything had happened to him, these earnest men would have inflicted upon themselves the extreme penalty.

"And now," I said, as we parted, "go to your posts, explain the petition to our members, and tell them to come to-morrow to lay it before the Tsar. If he does not come, and if innocent

blood be shed, there will no longer be any Tsar for us. I myself am going to the Minister of Justice. If they arrest me, you will tell your fellows and continue the movement to the end; if not, we shall meet this evening."

When my friend K—— had returned from the Minister of the Interior, we went together to the Minister of Justice. He remained in the sledge, and at a little distance some of my men stood on guard to report if I were arrested. It was evident that everybody, the porters, officials, and messengers, knew what was going on and the purpose of my visit, and they treated me with respect, curiosity, and even servility.

"Tell me frankly what it all means," the Minister asked me, as soon as we were alone. I asked him in return to tell me frankly whether I should be arrested if I spoke out without reserve. At first he appeared confused, but after reflection he answered, "No;" and this he repeated more emphatically at my request. I then explained to him the terrible conditions in which the workmen in St. Petersburg and the rest of Russia have to labour.

"The country is passing through a serious political and economic crisis," I said. "Each class of the population is drawing up statements of its needs and demands, and embodying them in petitions to the Tsar; and, therefore, it is time

that the workmen, whose life is so hard, should state their needs also to the Emperor."

With this I handed him a copy of our petition. Only fifteen copies of it had been printed: one each for the eleven branches of the association, one on better paper for the Tsar, one each for the Ministers of the Interior and Justice, and one for myself. (This last I gave to an English newspaper correspondent, expressing the hope that God would grant us at least the rights which Englishmen enjoy.) I was, therefore, not a little surprised when Muravieff told me that he already had a copy.

He took my own, however, and looked through it again; and at last, extending his arms in a gesture of despair, exclaimed, "But you want to limit the monarchy!"

"Yes; but that limitation will be for the good of the Sovereign himself and of the people. If there should be no such reform from above, the state of Russia is such that there will inevitably be a revolution, a struggle that may last for years and entail terrible bloodshed. Then, too, we do not ask that all our demands shall be immediately conceded; we would be satisfied with the more necessary concessions. Only let all the sufferers be amnestied and the representatives of the people be immediately convoked. The whole nation will then be filled with enthusiasm

toward the Tsar." Feeling strongly moved, as I recognized the opportunity that lay before him, I added, "An historical moment has come when you, your Excellency, might play a great part. Some years ago you incurred odium by striving to secure the condemnation of those who were fighting for popular liberty. Now you can wipe out that stigma. Drive at once to the Tsar and tell him that, without loss of time, he should come and speak to his people. We will guarantee his person; fall at his feet, if need be, and beg him for his own sake to receive the deputation, and your name will be inscribed gratefully in the annals of our country."

Muravieff visibly changed colour as he listened to me. Then he suddenly rose, stretched out his hand, and dismissed me with the words, "I will do my duty."

As I walked downstairs the thought struck me that these ambiguous words might only mean that he was going to the Tsar with the advice, "Shoot without hesitation!" At the thought, I went to the telephone in the vestibule of the building, called for Mr. Kokovtseff, the Minister of Finance, and told him what had occurred, begging him also to intervene to stop bloodshed. I was interrupted, however, before I could get any reply.

From that moment I became convinced that

there would be serious trouble. But the movement could not now be stopped without shattering every hope for the future. To warn the people of what might happen, however, I sent delegates to the industrial village of Kolpino, and myself went round the branches of the association. At each I addressed the workmen, telling them that they must come with us, with their wives and children, on the following day, and that if the Emperor would not hear us, and we were instead met with bullets, there would for us be no longer any Tsar.

During the last three days preceding the climax of January 22, St. Petersburg seethed with excitement. All the factories, mills, and workshops gradually stopped working, till at last not one chimney remained smoking in that great industrial district. Though open manifestations of popular feeling in the streets are not easy or safe in Russia, there was abundant evidence of the sensation that filled people's minds. Thousands of men and women gathered incessantly before the premises of the branches of the Workmen's Association. I and the eleven branch chairmen and other leaders of the workmen spoke continuously, explaining the wording of the petition to the Tsar and preparing for the procession to the Winter Palace.

After each speech the audience was invited

to sign the petition in an adjoining room. More than one hundred thousand working people in all attached their names or their marks, but what happened to the signed copies later on I do not know.

Thus I passed from branch to branch, in a sledge drawn by a beautiful quick horse with a devoted driver, and, so as to pass unrecognized, wearing a fur coat over my cassock and an ordinary cap. In the premises of the second branch the air became so heavy that several persons fainted, and the meeting was interrupted by shouts of "I am suffocating!" Even worse; in the branch beyond the Narvskaya Zastava, for want of air the lamps went out, and we had to continue our meeting in the large courtyard. There, mounted on a barrel, by the light of a lantern and of the stars shining upon the snow, I read the petition to a crowd which must have numbered ten thousand men. It was a grand and moving scene.

Until January 21—that is to say, until I understood from my interviews with the Ministers that the authorities would probably try to stop us—I instructed my lieutenants to carefully avoid any attack on the Tsar in their speeches, and not to allow any such attack. But on that day I told them to speak openly, so as to make it clear that if we were not peacefully

received, the whole responsibility must lie upon the Government and the monarch himself. The shout, "Away with the Tsar if he will not listen!" then first began to be heard. On the evening of the 21st, in a room adjoining one of our branch halls, I found several representatives of the Revolutionary Socialist and Social Democratic parties. Thoroughly tired out as I was, I could not refuse to talk over our plans with them. "We shall go on Sunday as we have planned," I said. "Do not put out any of your flags, so that it may not have the colour of a revolutionary demonstration. You can go in advance of the crowd if you like. When I enter the Winter Palace I will have with me two flags, one white and one red. If the Tsar receives the deputation, I will signal with the white flag; if he refuses, with the red flag, and in that case you may raise your own red flag and do what you think necessary." I asked them if they had any arms in case of necessity. The Social Democrats answered that they had none; the Revolutionists that they had some revolvers, which I understood that they would use if the troops shot at the people. But it was impossible at that time to work out any plan. "In any case," I said, "do not touch the Tsar himself. His person must be secure, and there had better not be even any hostile shouts. Let him return quietly to

Tsarskoye Selo." The Revolutionists promised that this should be done.

During these visits it became evident to me that a large part of the population of the city would take part in the procession on the following Sunday. At one meeting a little old woman asked me, "And what if our Little Father, the Tsar, will not come out to us for a long time? I was told that he is not in St. Petersburg."

"No," I answered; "but he is not far away. It is only half an hour's journey. We must wait, if necessary, till late at night, and so you had better take some food with you." And, in fact, it was bread they took, not arms.

In the course of the evening I instructed my friend K—— to go to certain prominent Liberals, including Maxim Gorky, and to ask them to make an effort to prevent bloodshed. They duly went to Prince Sviatopolk-Mirski and to M. Witte, but without success. My visits were finished at about 7 p.m., and it was plain that the procession would be as imposing as could be desired. I felt that I had done my duty. That day I had made about fifty short speeches. Afterwards all the leaders of the workmen, about eighteen in number, gathered with me at an inn to have some food and to say good-bye to each other. The waiter who served us whispered to me, "We know that you are going to-morrow to the Tsar for the poor

people. God help you!" This place was not quiet enough, and so after our meal we went to the house of a merchant friend of mine, where we were not likely to be disturbed. I was oppressed with doubts whether all these excellent men should walk in front of the crowd, perhaps to a certain death. They had created this wonderful movement. What would happen to it if they should all die? For myself, I should march in front, and at last I decided the same for them. The stake was too great for us to grudge any sacrifice. I see now that this was a great mistake. I instructed them each to find two substitutes in case they were killed, but I fear hardly any of them did so. I appointed Vassilieff, if need be, to take my place, and another to replace him. The arrangements for the procession were then discussed. We planned out the general lines, but freedom had to be left to each branch president to organize his own procession; only the final goal was the same for all—to reach the Winter Palace.

I thanked them all for their help in our common cause. "The great moment for us has come. Do not grieve if there are victims. It is not in the fields of Manchuria, but here, in the streets of the capital, that blood, if it be spilt, will prepare the ground for the resurrection of Russia. Do not remember me with ill feeling.

Show that workmen can not only organize the people, but can die for them."

They were all deeply moved as we shook hands, and each took down the addresses of their several relatives, so that those who remained alive might take care of the families of the others. Then we sent for the nearest photographer, who came at once. He turned out to be the same man who had photographed us with Foulon, so I made a pretext for sending him away, and we then went in small groups to another photographer, who took us by magnesium light.

# CHAPTER XIV

## THE MORNING OF JANUARY 22

I PASSED the night in the branch quarters of the Narvskaya Zastava. My body-guard, a gigantic smith named Philipoff, well armed, drove me thither. He was a fine athletic man, with a large beard, and was among the victims of "Bloody Sunday." As we drove along we heard everywhere the sinister sound of soldiers with fixed bayonets marching, and Cossacks on their horses. Otherwise the streets were deserted, save for an occasional wayfarer passing with anxious face across the snow.

We reached our destination, and found another large crowd of people gathered there. There was also waiting for me an engineer of a large factory, who, since the beginning of the strike, had taken a keen interest in the development of events and my part in them. He was one of the local leaders of the revolutionary movement, and wished to see me in order to learn whether I had any definite plan in case of a collision with the soldiery. I

passed the night in the room of one of our workmen, and slept soundly, my faithful Philipoff sleeping on the floor before my door, and a relay of men watching outside through the long hours.

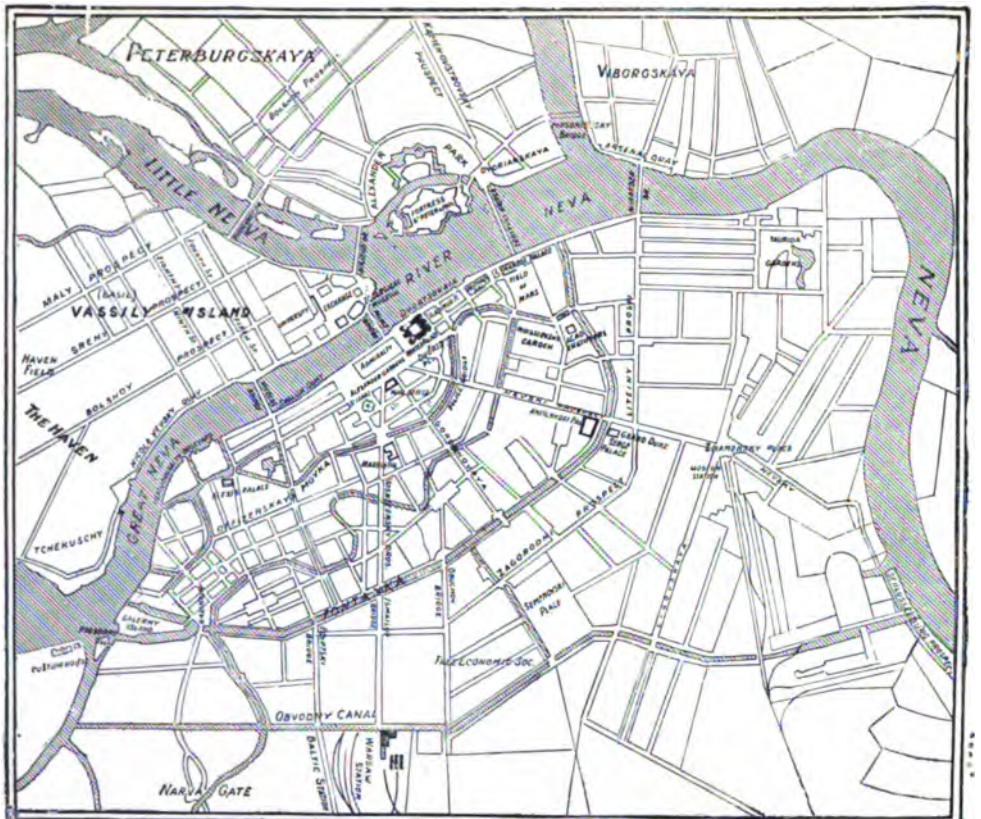
The night passed without incident, and at nine o'clock in the morning I got up and took tea with a few of the men. The police evidently did not know where I was. In the midst of our meal, a workman, from whom we had all held aloof because of his suspicious conduct, hurried into the room and, suddenly seeing me, stood in astonishment for a moment, and then, before any one could get hold of him, ran out again. Soon afterwards a messenger came from General Foulon to ask me to speak to him by telephone. I sent a workman instead, however, on pretext of want of time. But the workman returned without speaking to the Prefect, having met on the way the local *pristav* (police-sergeant), who had exclaimed to him, "Ah, so Father George is here!" My messenger understood that I might be in danger of immediate arrest, and so hurried back.

I then went to our branch premises. There, on the doors, was still hanging the large poster on which was written in huge letters the invitation to all the workmen of St. Petersburg to join in the procession to the Winter Palace. The

poster had been hanging there for two days, and the police had not interfered with it in any way. This fact led me and the other leaders of the men to think either that the authorities had no intention of interfering with us, or that the police had no knowledge of what the attitude of the Government was to be. Throughout the city the same impression was created, and this undoubtedly encouraged the people to come out in their masses to support the workmen's demonstration.

By ten o'clock an immense crowd was waiting, as I had announced that the procession would start at that hour. The people were absolutely sober and orderly, but evidently filled with a sense of the importance of this day for themselves and their fellow-countrymen. Some of them who had not yet heard the wording of the petition were having it read to them.

But now the first mutterings of the storm which was presently to break over us began to be heard. Workmen came in and announced with some anxiety, but hardly yet with any real alarm, that the gates of the Narvskaya Zastava were guarded by troops. Before we started a succession of messengers arrived, and it became evident that during the night the whole city had been transformed into a military camp. Along all the streets companies of soldiers — cavalry, infantry, and artillery —




MAP OF ST. PETERSBURG, SHOWING THE CHIEF POINTS OF THE MASSACRE ON JANUARY 22, 1905.

[*To face p.* 176.

were moving, accompanied by military ambulances and kitchens. At intervals pickets stood around lighted bonfires, with their arms stacked close at hand, and in the interim of waiting amused themselves with games. Even the Foot Guards had been moved from their barracks in readiness. The "Red" Cossacks of His Majesty's Guard, as well as the ordinary "Blue" or Ataman Cossacks, were quartered in different parts of the city, and both cavalry and infantry had been dispatched to the suburbs. The place before the Winter Palace was full of troops of all kinds, and in all the public squares regiments were camped. The bridges over the Neva were also occupied, and especially the Troïtsky Bridge, where companies of Cossacks, Lancers, Grenadiers, and the Novgorod Dragoons were stationed. From the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul three cannons had been rolled out and placed on this bridge, which joins the fortress to the mainland. Even in the fortress itself preparations had been made, as though the Japanese, and not unarmed subjects of the Tsar, were threatening it. The authorities were evidently afraid that the people would attempt to rush the arsenal. According to reports which reached me, the military preparations were directed by the Grand Duke Vladimir, but the orders were given formally in the name of General Prince S. Vassilchikoff. Everywhere the

tramways were stopped, but there was not yet any interference with sledges and foot-passengers.

While hearing these reports, the idea occurred to me that it would be well to give to the procession a distinctly religious character. I accordingly despatched some men to the nearest chapel to get the church banners and icons; but the sexton refused to deliver them. I then sent one hundred workmen to take them by force, and a few minutes later they were brought in. I also ordered that the Tsar's portrait should be taken from our branch premises in order to emphasize the peaceful and orderly character of our gathering.

The crowd had now grown to immense proportions. The men came with their wives, and some with their children, all in their Sunday clothes; and I noticed that argument or dispute among them was at once stopped by such words as, "This is not the time for talking."

Soon after ten we started upon our journey from just outside the south-western boundary of the city to its centre at the Winter Palace—the first procession that ever went through the streets of St. Petersburg to demand of the Sovereign some recognition of popular rights. It was a dry, frosty morning, typical of the Russian midwinter. I had warned the men that whoever carried the banners might fall the first in case of shooting; but in answer to my invitation a

crowd of them rushed forward, fighting for this dangerous distinction. An old woman, who evidently wished to give her son, a boy of seventeen, a chance of seeing the Tsar, placed an icon in his hands and put him in the front rank. In the first row were the men carrying a large framed portrait of the Tsar; then followed another file with the banners and icons, and I stood in the midst of these. Behind us came a crowd of about twenty thousand people, men and women, old and young. They all marched bareheaded, in spite of the bitter cold, full of the simple intention of seeing their Sovereign in order, as one of them said, "to cry out their griefs like children on the breast of their father."

# CHAPTER XV

## THE MASSACRE AT THE NARVA GATE

"SHALL we go straight toward the gate, or by a roundabout route to avoid the soldiers?" I was asked. I shouted huskily, "No; straight through them. Courage! Death or Freedom!" and the crowd shouted in return, "Hurrah!" We then started forward, singing in one mighty, solemn voice the Tsar's hymn, "God Save thy People." But when we came to the line, "Save Nicholas Alexandrovitch," some of the men who belonged to the Socialist party were wicked enough to substitute the words, "Save George Appolonovitch," while others simply repeated the words, "Death or Freedom!" The procession moved in a compact mass. In front of me were my two body-guards and a young fellow with dark eyes from whose face his hard labouring life had not yet wiped away the light of youthful gaiety. On the flanks of the crowd ran the children. Some of the women insisted on walking in the

first rows, in order, as they said, to protect me with their bodies, and force had to be used to remove them. I may mention also as a significant fact that at the start the police not only did not interfere with the procession, but moved with us with bared heads in recognition of the religious emblems. Two local police-officers marched bare-headed in front of us, preventing any hindrance to our advance, and forcing a few carriages that we met to turn aside in our favour. In this way we approached the Narva Gate, the crowd becoming denser as we progressed, the singing more impressive, and the whole scene more dramatic.

At last we reached within two hundred paces of where the troops stood. Files of infantry barred the road, and in front of them a company of cavalry was drawn up, with their swords shining in the sun. Would they dare to touch us? For a moment we trembled, and then started forward again.

Suddenly the company of Cossacks galloped rapidly towards us with drawn swords. So, then, it was to be a massacre after all! There was no time for consideration, for making plans, or giving orders. A cry of alarm arose as the Cossacks came down upon us. Our front ranks broke before them, opening to right and left, and down this lane the soldiers drove their horses,

striking on both sides. I saw the swords lifted and falling, the men, women, and children dropping to the earth like logs of wood, while moans, curses, and shouts filled the air. It was impossible to reason in the fever of this crisis. At my order the front rows formed again in the wake of the Cossacks, who penetrated farther and farther, and at last emerged from the end of the procession.

Again we started forward, with solemn resolution and rising rage in our hearts. The Cossacks turned their horses, and began to cut their way through the crowd from the rear. They passed through the whole column and galloped back towards the Narva Gate, where—the infantry having opened their ranks and let them through—they again formed line. We were still advancing, though the bayonets raised in threatening rows seemed to point symbolically to our fate. A spasm of pity filled my heart, but I felt no fear. Before we started, my dear friend, the workman K——, had said to me, "We are going to give your life as a sacrifice." So be it!

We were not more than thirty yards from the soldiers, being separated from them only by the bridge over the Tarakanovsky Canal, which here marks the border of the city, when suddenly, without any warning and without a moment's delay, was heard the dry crack of many rifle-shots. I

was informed later on that a bugle was blown, but we could not hear it above the singing, and even if we had heard it we should not have known what it meant.

Vassilieff, with whom I was walking hand in hand, suddenly left hold of my arm, and sank upon the snow. One of the workmen who carried the banners fell also. Immediately one of the two police-officers to whom I had referred shouted out, "What are you doing? How dare you fire upon the portrait of the Tsar?" This, of course, had no effect, and both he and the other officer were shot down—as I learned afterwards, one was killed and the other dangerously wounded.

I turned rapidly to the crowd and shouted to them to lie down, and I also stretched myself out upon the ground. As we lay thus another volley was fired, and another, and yet another, till it seemed as though the shooting was continuous. The crowd first kneeled and then lay flat down, hiding their heads from the rain of bullets, while the rear rows of the procession began to run away. The smoke of the fire lay before us like a thin cloud, and I felt it stiflingly in my throat. An old man named Lavrentieff, who was carrying the Tsar's portrait, had been one of the first victims. Another old man caught the portrait as it fell from his hands and carried

it till he, too, was killed by the next volley. With his last gasp the old man said, "I may die, but I will see the Tsar." One of the banner-carriers had his arm broken by a bullet. A little boy of ten years, who was carrying a church lantern, fell pierced by a bullet, but still held the lantern tightly and tried to rise again, when another shot struck him down. Both the smiths who had guarded me were killed, as well as all those who were carrying the icons and banners; and all these emblems now lay scattered on the snow. The soldiers were actually shooting into the courtyards of the adjoining houses, where the crowd tried to find refuge, and, as I learned afterwards, bullets even struck persons inside, through the windows.

At last the firing ceased. I stood up with a few others who remained uninjured and looked down at the bodies that lay prostrate around me. I cried to them, "Stand up!" But they lay still. I could not at first understand. Why did they lie there? I looked again, and saw that their arms were stretched out lifelessly, and I saw the scarlet stain of blood upon the snow. Then I understood. It was horrible. And my Vassilieff lay dead at my feet.

Horror crept into my heart. The thought flashed through my mind, "And this is the work of our Little Father, the Tsar." Perhaps this

THE MASSACRE AT THE NARVA GATE.

(*Drawn by F. de Haenen.*)

[*To face p.* 184.

anger saved me, for now I knew in very truth that a new chapter was opened in the book of the history of our people. I stood up, and a little group of workmen gathered round me again. Looking backward, I saw that our line, though still stretching into the distance, was broken, and that many of the people were fleeing. It was in vain that I called to them, and in a moment I stood there, the centre of a few scores of men, trembling with indignation amid the broken ruins of our movement.

Again we started, and again the firing began. After the last volley I rose again and found myself alone, but still unhurt.

Suddenly, in the midst of my despair, somebody took hold of my arm and dragged me rapidly away into a small side street a few paces from the scene of the massacre. It was idle for me to protest. What more could be done? "There is no longer any Tsar for us!" I exclaimed.

I gave myself unwillingly into the hands of my rescuers. All those who remained of us, save this handful, were shot down or dispersed in terror. We had gone unarmed. There was nothing left but to live for a day when the guilty would be punished and this great wrong would be righted—a day when, if we came again unarmed, it would only be because arms were no longer necessary.

In the by-street we were approached immediately by three or four of my workmen, and I recognized in my rescuer the engineer who had seen me on the previous night at the Narvskaya Zastava. He took out from his pocket a pair of scissors and cut off my priest's hair, which the men immediately divided between themselves. One of them rapidly tore off my cassock and hat, and gave me instead his own overcoat; but this appeared to be smeared with blood. Then another poor fellow took off his own ragged coat and cap, and insisted on my wearing them. It was all done in two or three minutes. The engineer urged that I should go with him to the house of a friend, and I decided to do so.

In the meantime the soldiers stood in possession of the field of the massacre. For some time they did not themselves attend to the killed and wounded, and they did not allow any one else to do so. Only after a long interval did they begin to pile the bodies on a number of sledges, and to remove them for burial or for hospital treatment. The wounds, according to the statements of the doctors, were, in an overwhelming majority of cases, of a very severe character, and were in the head or body, seldom in the limbs. Some of those shot had several bullet-wounds, and on not one of the bodies was found any arms, not even a stone in the pocket. One doctor

of a local hospital, to which thirty-four corpses were taken, said that the sight was a sickening one, the faces being contorted with horror and suffering, and the floor covered with pools of blood.

# CHAPTER XVI

## THE FIRST BARRICADES

As I learned within the next few hours, the other branches of our association had suffered similarly in other quarters of the city. Apart from the smaller branches which had their head-quarters in the centre of the town, there had been four chief starting-places: our own in the south-west of the city; the Peterburgskaya Storona, beyond the Little Neva, on the north; Basil Island (Vassily Ostroff), between the Great and Little Neva; and the Schlüsselburg Road, beyond the Neva, on the south-east.

At the branch of the Peterburgskaya District a great crowd had gathered in the morning, waiting for the start of the procession. It showed the most peaceful spirit, no harm was expected, and while the men were standing about several mounted soldiers, who were passing, stopped to ask for matches to light their cigarettes and to speak to the workmen in a friendly way. Before

a start was made the news came that the troops were barring the way to the Palace, and that already men and women had been struck down by the swords of the Cossacks. Nevertheless, the procession started toward the Troïtsky Bridge, and in the same direction marched another crowd from the Viborgskaya District, somewhat to the north-east, starting from their branch quarters in Orenburgskaya Street. For some distance this joint procession was not interfered with, but when they approached the place near the Alexandrovsky Park, at the back of the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, they met some companies of troops barring the way to the Troïtsky Bridge.

An officer advanced to within about one hundred yards of the crowd, and, seeing him waving his hands, the front rows of the procession stopped and three delegates were sent forward by the men to speak to him. Before they could reach him, however, he shouted, "Don't come here, or we shall shoot!" The deputies kneeled in the snow, turning out their pockets to show that they were unarmed. Then the officer approached them, took from one of them a copy of the petition to the Tsar, and led him away toward the troops, followed on the footpath by the other two men. Thinking that it had been decided to allow them to pass on, the crowd now began again to move. Immediately, without

any warning, the soldiers discharged a volley, and then another, and a third. At this place several scores of people were killed and more than one hundred wounded. All this, according to the eye-witnesses from whom I received the information, was done with extreme rapidity, so that, even if the crowd had tried to disperse, they would not have had time to get away. It would also have been impossible to disperse quickly, because all the roads behind the procession were crowded with people, from the bridge northward along the Kamenostrovsky Prospect to the point at which it meets the Bolshoy Prospect.

When those of the crowd remaining alive began to break away and to turn to the left into the Dvorianskaya Street, which leads by the Samsonievsky Bridge into the Viborg suburb, a company of cavalry galloped after them, striking on this side and that with their swords. Many tried to take refuge in neighbouring houses, but the officer in command ordered that the gates should be closed and no one allowed to enter. Even when the streets had been cleared and everything was quiet, unarmed wayfarers were not safe from attack. Thus, a German subject named Martinat was wounded by a sword-cut on the head while crossing a street, and even when he had fallen to the ground the soldiers continued to strike at him. Many others in the same way

were struck down, and then further wounded while lying upon the ground.

Here also the wounded and killed remained in the places where they had fallen for some time, the police and troops forbidding the public to carry them away. Some of the people stopped passing sledges with the intention of using them for this purpose. But the police forbade the drivers to go farther, and some of those who disobeyed were wounded. In spite of these threats and punishments, however, the drivers not only gave assistance, but in many cases refused to take any fare for their journeys of charity.

At this point an event took place which stands alone in the records of this terrible day. The people of Russia have been only too patient under generations of suffering, but already a deep change was visibly stirring them. The sight of hundreds of victims, brutally shot down in their innocence and helplessness, stirred a new indignation in the breasts of all those who witnessed it. No sooner had the crowd been dispersed in one place than they began to re-assemble elsewhere; and now the revolutionary speakers, who had been till this morning ignored or treated with actual hostility, found a ready hearing. "There is no use in going to the Palace," they said; "you see that the Tsar will not listen to our petition. We

cannot get anything from him with empty hands. We must get arms." And in more than one place the crowd shouted, in reply, "Give us arms." Breaking up into smaller groups, they moved along the neighbouring streets, stopping officers who drove by in sledges and policemen—every policeman in Russia is armed with a six-chambered revolver—and taking away their arms. Yet there was an instinct of order among them, and hooligans who were caught attempting to plunder shops, perhaps at the incitement of the police themselves—this would be no new thing with us—were stopped by the workmen and driven away.

The workmen on Basil Island gathered in the Fourth Street, near the premises of the branch, between the Sredne and Maly Prospects, intending to make their way to the Palace by the bridge crossing to the Admiralty Quay. After listening to the orders given by their leaders and singing twice the "Lord's Prayer," they started soon after eleven o'clock, in perfect order, in the direction of the Neva. They soon came to a stand before some companies of infantry and cavalry with swords drawn, who blocked the road. The crowd, which was not here a very large one, approached to within twenty paces and then stopped. Deputies from the procession, waving white handkerchiefs, advanced and tried to explain to the officer their peaceful intentions,

raising their hands to show that they were unarmed. Here again, without parley, at a signal from the officer, a troop of cavalry rode with drawn swords into the crowd. The people quickly opened a way, rushing to the footpaths on either side. When the mounted soldiers had galloped through the procession, the infantry shouldered their rifles, but this time they were not discharged. The cavalry returned, striking at the people with their swords and driving them into the adjoining streets, especially into Academy Street and Bungsky Street, where the police and soldiers cruelly wounded many and killed some. The workmen then turned backward from the centre of the city. Stories of the terrible massacres which had occurred elsewhere had now reached them and provoked a fever of wrath. A small boy who had been wounded was being driven by in a sledge, and, seeing him, a cry for arms and for revenge arose from the crowd. Several policemen were disarmed, and some of the men wished to stop the traffic, but their comrades would not allow this.

Some one remembered that there was a small armoury shop in a by-street in the district, and a rush was made for it. On the demand of the crowd, the trembling porter with difficulty turned the key of the iron gate and opened it; and another porter, dumb with fright, pointed out the

underground floor where the arms were stored. The door could not be opened, so a few men climbed through the window, and found within heaps of rusty old swords and ancient Caucasian daggers, which they threw out into the street. Bars of iron and anything that could serve for weapons were also removed. When the workshop was cleared, a shout was raised that the soldiers were coming. Thus crudely provided, the crowd of workmen and students moved along the streets, disarming the solitary policemen and officers who passed by. At length they reached the headquarters of the branch in Fourth Street, where a large crowd stood, listening with rising anger to the sound of volleys from the other side of the Neva. As they approached with their rusty swords lifted in the air, the men were greeted by an enthusiastic cheer.

The street was quickly barred by a wire run across from one house to another, and behind this two barricades were built, inside which a crowd of the men stood. A squadron of Cossacks clattered down the street, but stopped when they saw the obstruction, and galloped back. Soon afterwards several companies of infantry arrived, and, drawing up in lines, fired volley after volley. Many of the defenders dispersed, others took refuge in neighbouring houses and threw bricks and other missiles at the soldiers. But the wire rope was soon cut,

the barricade destroyed, and many of the people who could not escape were killed or severely wounded.

The cruelties perpetrated during the onslaught on the crowds in Basil Island were hardly exceeded in any part of the city during this awful day. One officer, named Gurieff, openly boasted of his prowess. When he got tired of using his sword he asked for a bayonet, and with it attacked a young workman who had taken refuge in the entrance of a house. Gurieff chased him into the house, and when the hunted man ran upstairs the officer followed him, caught him at last, and pierced him with the bayonet. The victim, who was struck through the heart, was hardly more than a child. Gurieff told the story himself. Another Lancer also told with gusto how he had forced the workmen themselves to destroy their barricades. When they refused to carry away the wood, he struck one of them with his sword, felling him to the ground. He then struck another down in the same way. "But," he added triumphantly, "the third took the wood away."

The barricade and the wire entanglements were intended to protect the premises of the branch of the Workmen's Association from an unexpected attack. To make retreat easier, all the gates of the adjoining houses were forced open. The men had only a remote idea of how

to build a barricade, but they were helped by a short, pale-faced officer who had given himself to the cause of the people, and it was pathetic to see how they relied upon him. The work was executed with enthusiasm. Opposite the premises of the branch a house was being built, and the men took from it boards, staircases, bricks, and other materials. The telephone wires were cut and the poles sawn down so as to cut off Government communication with the district. The poles were also pulled down in Sixth Street and Maly Prospect.

A student who had been released from long imprisonment on a political charge stood in the first row of the fighting, which continued for some time. By some miracle he was not hit by the repeated volleys, and continued to stand, flag in hand, till at last he was impaled on a bayonet and torn to pieces. The men died on the barricade with manly courage. After the first volley of blank cartridge, one of them stood up, waving a red flag, and cried to the soldiers, "If your conscience permit it, shoot." He fell immediately, pierced by several bullets.

# CHAPTER XVII

## NEAR THE PALACE

THE reception of the Schlüsselburg Road procession by the officers told off to arrest it was not so heartless. A crowd of more than ten thousand people had started as early as nine o'clock in the morning, the distance being comparatively long, under the leadership of the chairman of the branch, my friend Petroff. As in other places, there were many women and children in the crowd, which stretched out in a line more than a mile long. It marched peacefully, but in high spirits, with confidence of success. When the Schlüsselburg fire-station was reached, it was found that some companies of infantry and Ataman Cossacks barred the way. A police-sergeant and the colonel of the Cossacks advanced and summoned the crowd to stop; but Petroff, with several other men, approached the officers and tried to convince them that they should be let through, "as they were not disturbing the public

order." The colonel refused, however, repeating that the procession must not advance, or he would have to fire upon it. After a lengthy discussion the crowd began to start again. Three volleys were then discharged, and the people threw themselves on the ground. Either, however, because the shots were only of blank cartridge, or from nervousness or merciful intent—my informants do not agree which—no one was struck. On discovering this, the people rose and began to move forward again. The infantry then opened their ranks, and the Cossacks rapidly rode through and fell upon the procession. Few were wounded—one of the exceptions being Petroff, who was knocked down and severely hurt by being kicked by a horse—but the advance was effectually stopped. As the soldiers and the people were now mixed up, it was, fortunately, impossible to fire. The commanding officer shouted again that he was ordered not to let the procession cross the bridge. The leaders of the workmen understood, however, that he would not object to their going by another road. Somebody opened a gate leading from the side of the high-road down to the river Neva. The crowd at once rushed down to the river and made their way across the ice, proceeding along the opposite bank or along the ice-bound river itself. A large number of them managed thus to reach the centre of the city

without further pursuit, and got to land on the Admiralty Quay, beside the Winter Palace.

From other quarters also, in spite of the attacks of the troops, the workmen succeeded in penetrating in large numbers into the centre of the town, and assembled together, with crowds from the central branches of the association, near Dvortsovaya Place and along the Nevsky Prospect. It appears, from a careful inquiry organized by representatives of the St. Petersburg Bar, that there was no interference during the morning with traffic on the Nevsky between the Police Bridge and Znamenskaya Place. From early morning to 1 p.m. the public moved freely as usual to and fro along the Nevsky, though in larger crowds. The number of workmen among them was at first comparatively small, but increased later on. Dvortsovaya Place, however, had been transformed into a military camp.

Suddenly, at about half-past one, on the order of the captain of the Imperial Cavalry Guards, a squadron of cavalry galloped into the crowd which was waiting our coming near the Alexandrovsky Gardens, which abut upon the square on the side opposite to the Winter Palace, and began to cut them down with their *nagaïkas* (loaded whips) and swords. There was perfect order and quiet; indeed, many of the people were women, old men, and children. They clung with despair

to the railings of the gardens. Then the cries sound of rifle-shots was heard. The Preobrajensky Guards were firing volley after volley, apparently enjoying this slaughter of the innocents. Most of those who fell were children and women. Eye-witnesses told me that the blood-stained scene of the massacre presented a ghastly sight. Hundreds fell in this place, and from that moment onward shooting went on here and at other points in the Nevsky and adjoining streets almost uninterruptedly. The officers and soldiers seemed to have lost all human feeling. One officer, asked why they went on shooting, replied, "We are sick of them." Another said, "I told them to disperse, but they only laughed." At one point a whole group of people hiding themselves in a corner were deliberately shot down. One of them, who escaped for a moment, came forward, unbuttoned his coat, and bared his breast, shouting, "Shoot here!" A shot was fired, and the poor fellow dropped dead.

Another battue took place on the Moyka, where the Cavalry Guards, standing on the Pevtchesky Bridge, rode the people down and afterwards fired upon the survivors. Near the Police Bridge the crowd gathered little by little from other parts. Soon after three o'clock a company of the Moscow Regiment drew up. A man came forward from the crowd and rapidly

appealed to them on the ground that they also had been workmen, and would be workmen again when their term of military service was over. An angry officer made for him and tried to drag him into the middle of the street. Some of his comrades defended him, and then the officer took out his revolver and fired into them. One man fell, and blood poured profusely from his wound; but, not yet satisfied, the officer ordered the troops to fire. My unfortunate people still believed that bullets would not be used, but three volleys were fired, and heaps of killed and wounded were left on the ground.

Fifteen minutes later, on the Police Bridge, a bugle was blown. The crowd, which was standing peacefully looking on, did not understand what it meant. There was no disorder, no shouts, and the troops were only twenty paces away from the mass of the people. Suddenly a volley was discharged, and many victims fell. Those who remained unhurt ran along the Nevsky, but two more volleys struck their flying ranks. The Nevsky is a perfectly straight, broad avenue, in which bullets would strike at a long distance, and it was sheer massacre to fire volleys there. I may mention, also, that the wounds in many cases were found to present a suspicious appearance, the outward hole being larger than that of entry, suggesting to the doctors who examined

them that explosive bullets had been used. Apart, perhaps, from Basil Island, in no other part of the city did the troops, and especially their officers, exhibit so much unnecessary and gross cruelty. Baron Anatole Osten Drisen, captain of the Preobrajensky Regiment, though not formally in command, amused himself by knocking down an old man in Millionaya Street. Gervais, an officer of the Finnish Regiment, exhibited as much cowardice as cruelty, hiding behind his soldiers when he thought himself to be in danger. But not all of the soldiers liked their task. The captain of the Preobrajensky Regiment, Nicholas Mansuroff, who ordered the first volley to be fired near Dvortsovaya Place, not satisfied with the evidence of the heaps of killed and wounded, found it necessary to examine the rifles of his soldiers, eight of which were found not to have been discharged. The eight men were immediately put under arrest. The poor children, many of whom fell victims to a natural curiosity either to see better or to save themselves, climbed into the trees. One corporal approached Mansuroff and, pointing at a child on a branch of a tree, asked permission of "his Honour" to bring him down. The officer consenting, a bullet quickly finished this little life.

Sledges full of killed children were driven away from this spot; and I am told that nearly every

face bore, as it were, a frozen smile, so unexpectedly had death come.

Such were some of the ruthless deeds of the agents of the Tsar on that memorable day. It was only later on that I learned details of the massacres in other parts of the town. While I was standing in the little by-street near the Narva Gate, where the procession I had led was drowned in blood and confusion, it became clear to me that what had happened there must necessarily have taken place elsewhere also. It was now perfectly evident that there was no longer any possibility of doing anything in the open streets unless the people were provided with arms. My friend the engineer persuaded me to accompany him to the house of his friend, because, he said, the question of how to procure arms would be discussed there, and might be solved. I also felt that I must at once communicate with the thousands of the members of our association now scattered over the city, who would be wondering, not only as to the fate of friends and relatives, but also as to the future of our movement. Deciding, therefore, immediately to issue a proclamation to our people as to the meaning and lesson of what had happened, I turned away from the scene of our disaster and followed my new guardian.

A wounded man lay in the street as we passed.

His face expressed no pain or suffering; on the contrary, it shone with serenity as he looked at us. He evidently felt that he had suffered for a great cause. A workman who joined us on our way reported that the streets were full of troops and spies. I told those who accompanied us to separate in different directions. We ourselves immediately came upon a military patrol, but we were allowed to pass. A little farther on we came upon another patrol, but again we were left unmolested.

We passed by the Baltic Station and then by the Warsaw Station. Both were teeming with gendarmes. Taking a circuitous route toward our destination, we constantly met groups of people talking, with every sign of horror and indignation, about the events of the morning. At every step we saw heartrending scenes. Here was a mother kneeling on the snow and weeping over a child whose brains had been blown out. There two ladies were bandaging the throat of a young girl, whose beautiful face watched them pathetically, but without complaint. A few workmen passing by stayed for a moment, and I heard one of them say, "You have suffered for us. The hour is coming when we will revenge you." A sledge passed, its anxious driver looking furtively toward a group of soldiers who stood not far away. A student sat behind him, with another student in

his arms, whose pale, unconscious face, hanging on the arm of his comrade, left little hope of returning life. Through the unbuttoned coat could be seen a terrible chest wound. Two workmen, as they went by, lifted their caps and crossed themselves. At two places we came upon numbers of bodies lying on the snow. Nobody was attending to them, the troops at the neighbouring cross-ways not permitting the public to approach. We saw many wounded trying to hide their injuries and to struggle on to reach their homes. Patrols were everywhere moving along the streets and dispersing the people, who incessantly formed in new groups.

"Cowards! You are beaten in Manchuria, and here you shoot down unarmed people," I heard from one of the groups which was charged by Cossacks with drawn swords. At another point an old woman, standing over the body of a young fellow, perhaps her son, was alternately wailing and furiously cursing the name of the Tsar.

# CHAPTER XVIII

### THE END OF THE SLAUGHTER

At last we reached our destination. It was now about 1 p.m. The lady of the house shut me up in a room and gave me some food, which, to my astonishment, I ate with appetite. Then I was given a student's suit of clothes and taken to another house, where I again changed into an ordinary suit; and here I had my beard shaved off. After that I was taken to the house of the famous Russian writer, X——. He was greatly excited at seeing me, and, embracing me, began to cry. He gave me a glass of red wine, and pressed me to stay with him; but suddenly the torturing thought overwhelmed me that at this very moment people were dying outside, and I felt I must go and die also. X—— stopped me, and convinced me that it would be better to go with him a little later in the day to a meeting of "intellectuals," after which a secret meeting was to be held to consider the possibility of procuring arms for the people. I therefore

remained and composed my proclamation, which was worded thus—

"Comrades, Russian Workmen,—There is no Tsar. Between him and the Russian nation torrents of blood have flowed to-day. It is high time for the Russian workmen to begin without him to carry on the struggle for national freedom. You have my blessing for that fight. To-morrow I will be among you. To-day I am busy working for the cause."

Meanwhile X—— began to write an appeal to the civilized world. After that we drove to the building of the Free Economic Society near the Nevsky Prospect. Entering the hall, we found it packed with an excited audience. One speaker after another came upon the platform and reported briefly what they had seen of the events of the day in different districts of the city. At the announcement that the windows of the palace of the Grand Duke Sergius had been broken by the workmen the audience cheered vociferously, and so they did at other reports. But no one, I noticed, suggested that they should come out into the streets and fight beside the workmen.

At last X—— mounted the platform. "Here," he said, "is a letter from Father Gapon. There was a rumour that he was killed. That is not true. He has been at my house." Then he proceeded to read the above proclamation. The

audience began to applaud; but X—— indignantly stopped them, asking whether this was a time for cheering, when blood was flowing in the streets. "Here," he added, "is a delegate from Father Gapon, and he asks permission to speak to you."

Thus introduced, I went to the platform and spoke a few words. It was not, I said, a time for speech, but a time for action. "The workmen have shown to Russia that they know how to die. But, unhappily, they are unarmed, and with empty hands you cannot fight bayonets and rifles. It is your turn to help now. Give them the means to procure arms, and the people will do the rest." As I sat down a kindly old gentleman approached me and handed me a revolver, saying, "Here is one good weapon, at any rate!"

I think some of those present guessed who I was, but the secret was kept. At the end of the public meeting a few of those who had attended it gathered secretly in a side room, and my friend the engineer was among them. We discussed further the question of obtaining arms and the organization of a popular rising. While we were doing so X—— kept guard at the door. Suddenly a whisper was heard, "The Police!" A writer who was attending the meeting rapidly came to my side, took me by the arm, and hurried

me out of the building. He conducted me to his own house in a neighbouring street, and there I wrote a second proclamation to the workmen, and another to the troops. In the course of the latter I said—

"Against soldiers and officers who are slaying their innocent brothers, together with the wives and children of these, and against all the oppressors of the people, I utter my pastoral curse. Upon soldiers who help the nation to win liberty I invoke a blessing, and from the military oath of allegiance which they have taken to the traitorous Tsar, at whose behest the blood of innocent people has been shed, I do hereby absolve them."

Some copies of these were made at once and signed by me, one copy being sent to a secret printing-office, whence large numbers were afterwards issued.

This done, I was sitting full of anguish and heavy thoughts, when I was aroused by a noise and shrieks from the street. Looking from the window, I saw a crowd running in the direction of the Nevsky. Many of the people were shouting in terror. Then I heard again the ghastly crackle of rifle-shots. I could no longer stand here idle; and, in spite of the persuasions of my host, I went out. Directly I had left the house I suddenly became conscious of feeling very

strange in my new lay clothes. Soon I came out into the Nevsky Prospect, where there was a sinister solitude. Evidently the Cossacks had just galloped through the street, leaving devastation behind them. I approached the Znamenskaya Church, found a sledge, and ordered the driver to take me to the corner of the Obvodny and Drovianoy canals, where one of the branch headquarters of the association was situated. The whole district through which we passed was as silent as the grave. We met no one but patrols and encamped soldiers with stacked rifles.

I left the sledge, approached the gates, and found the *dvornik* (porter). It was now pitch-dark, and I was wearing spectacles to aid my disguise. I told the man that I was a newspaper correspondent, and asked him to tell me what was going on at the branch. He replied that everything was quiet and all right.

"Are there any soldiers inside?" I required.

"No, sir; none."

At this moment a tiny boy peeped out from behind the *dvornik*, and interrupted in a shrill voice, "Why, little uncle, the courtyard is full of soldiers, and the house too!"

Evidently I was on the verge of a trap, either for myself or for the leaders of the association generally. I turned slowly away, saying, "Well, if it is impossible to get information it is useless

to stay," and lost no time in taking my place in the sledge and driving away.

After making a circuitous journey we made for another branch, situated at the corner of the Nevsky and Dechtianay Street, but found it also full of troops. I decided, therefore, to return to my last abode, as midnight was already approaching. My host, who recognized me at once, was at first alarmed to see me so late. At this house I passed the night.

Next day I sent some members of the revolutionary party whom I knew to find out the more important of my workmen who had led the processions of the different branches. Not one of them could be found. Some had been killed or wounded, and others were avoiding their homes for fear of arrest. That day, as well as the following night, the shooting of men and women still continued in the capital, although on a smaller scale. Throughout Sunday night all the streets and bridges were guarded by soldiers. According to my calculations, on this fateful Sunday there were between six hundred and nine hundred killed, and at least five thousand wounded. The whole town resembled a besieged city. Shops, restaurants, theatres, all were closed. The Tsar and the members of his family were still in hiding—nobody knew where at the moment.

On the 24th the Cossacks and police replaced the firing parties of infantry. It was now no longer wholesale assassination, but general attacks upon isolated passengers in different parts of the town and in Basil Island. I have good reason to believe that the armed forces were in many cases made intoxicated by the authorities, and were commonly left without definite instructions. These drunken groups of soldiers, Cossacks, police, and plain-clothes agents, let loose upon the inhabitants of the town, perpetrated cruelties which would be hardly credible without this explanation.

I will relate only two or three instances of many which came to my knowledge, and which were proved, later on, by the investigation of the St. Petersburg barristers. A bricklayer, named Bykoff, went out from his house on the Maly Prospect in the evening. The street was unlit and deserted. Suddenly four infantrymen came along, knocked him down, and, while he was lying on the snow, bayoneted him. He lost consciousness, but came to his senses some hours later, and managed to crawl back to his home. His comrades at once took him to the Mary Magdalen Hospital, where, on examination, eleven bayonet wounds were found in the chest and left side, both lungs being pierced.

A student named Potchinkoff, who had come

from Archangel that very morning, took a tram at the corner of the Maly Prospect and Fourteenth Street at about 4 p.m. Students, I may interject, are peculiarly obnoxious to the police because of their frequent connection with University troubles, and with all efforts to secure popular liberty. As soon as Potchinkoff sat down, somebody shouted out, calling attention to him. Several detectives in plain clothes jumped on to the tram, dragged him off it, knocked him down, and trampled on him till he lost consciousness. He only came to his senses after he had been removed to the hospital. Two men who took his part during this shameful attack were treated similarly. One of them, a young man named Rosoff, who was passing at the time, shouted out, "Stop; you will kill him!" A policeman struck him with his sword on the head, which was fortunately shielded by a fur cap. He managed to run away, and tried to climb over a fence, every other escape being cut off. The policeman caught him, however, and repeatedly struck him, until at last one of the Cossacks said, "Enough!" He was then put in a sledge, and a policeman took him to the hospital. A workman named Stepanoff, seeing a crowd of about ten red-capped dragoons and some hooligans, evidently plain-clothes police, beating this student, asked why he was being struck. Stepanoff was answered by

being promptly knocked down and wounded by a number of sword-blows on the head and back, after which he was taken by sledge to the police station, and thence to hospital, where he lay for over two weeks.

It often happened, also, that even the *dvorniks*, who are in the employ of the police, suffered in these attacks. Peter Koroboff, the junior porter of a house in Twelfth Street, Basil Island, while standing on duty, heard a noise in the Maly Prospect, and went to see what was the matter. Suddenly two mounted soldiers with drawn swords made an onslaught upon him, striking him several times on the head. On getting back to his house he found the entrance barred, and he therefore returned to the Maly Prospect. Here he saw a group of soldiers, and near them a heap of bodies, apparently of workmen, piled up. He made for the soldiers, hoping for protection, but received instead kicks and blows with the butt-end of rifles. He was knocked down, became insensible, and was thrown on to the pile of bodies. At last, the street being completely cleared, the soldiers lifted their victims up, bound them in couples with telegraph wire, and then drove them to the Military Cadets' School, where their wounds were dressed, and, so far as possible, their names taken down. The *dvornik* told the officer in charge of his profession, and asked to be released, thinking

he had been arrested by mistake. However, he and the others were all driven to the Spasskaya Police Station, where Koroboff was allowed to write an application to the Prefect. He received no answer, but was liberated, with eighty-four other prisoners, three weeks later; and before leaving he was shown an order of the Prefect, in which it was stated that, for gathering in crowds (though he had been alone when arrested) in spite of the official prohibition, he had been condemned to three weeks' imprisonment. He was now free, but he had lost his situation, and was without means.

Numerous other instances might be cited; and there is good testimony that many of the victims were severely flogged and otherwise maltreated while under arrest.

# CHAPTER XIX

## THE TSAR AND HIS CHILDREN

CRUEL and senseless as these events must seem to the people of free countries, they take a still darker aspect in view of the cynicism which prompted the Tsar and his chief lieutenant, General Trepoff, in arranging the mock deputation of January 24. After having destroyed thousands of lives and wrought unheard-of misery upon his country on account of the wish of his people to send a deputation to him, the Emperor two days later conceived the idea that he might see a deputation after all. Whether he hoped to dispel from the mind of the country the impression of that evil day, or he merely wanted to throw dust in the eyes of the civilized world, would be difficult to say. Whatever its reason, the deputation was really beyond contempt. This is how it was arranged, according to the quaint narrative of one of the workmen who took part in the solemn farce.

"On the morning of the 24th," he says, "the

*kolodochny* (police officer) came to our factory, and said, 'We want a workman representing your factory, a pious man, having nothing against him, not very intelligent, though with common sense, and neither young nor very old.' Two such men were found, myself and Ivan. The officer came to us and told us to come to the police station. I asked him, 'What for? I have a wife and children.' 'Don't be afraid,' he replied; and he took us away. I was very much afraid, and thought, 'O Lord, why punishest thou me?' However, we need not have been anxious, for no harm was done to us.

"We were taken to the police station, stripped quite naked, and then were ordered to dress ourselves. We were then placed in a sledge, together with a policeman, and driven to the Winter Palace. There we found about thirty others already waiting. We were told to wait. We waited one hour, two hours. . . . It became so tedious! Suddenly the doors opened, and a General advanced into the hall, such a severe-looking General! We all bowed low. He looked at us very fixedly, and then he said, 'Well, gentlemen, you are about to be blessed with the joy of conversing with the Sovereign. Only, hold your tongues when he speaks to you, and keep on bowing.' We bowed again to the General. After that we were taken from the Winter Palace and

placed in the Tsar's carriages, and driven to the railway station. From there by an express train we went straight to Tzarskoye Selo. We were taken to the palace, and left all together in a hall. We stood and looked at each other. We felt dreadfully anxious. Again we waited for a long time.

"Suddenly the doors opened wide, and there entered the Little Father, the Tsar, with a ring of Generals round him, and a little piece of paper in his hands. We all bowed low, but he did not even look at us. He began to read from his little paper. He was so agitated! Of course he is the Tsar. And he read to us that everything that was written is true. Then he said, 'Go back to work. Good-bye.' We all bowed low, and the Sovereign went away. We thought to ourselves, 'What will happen now?' and still waited. But nothing happened. We were led from the hall to the kitchen, and were given some dinner, a really royal dinner, with vodka. Then we were put back into the carriages and taken to the station. We returned to St. Petersburg towards evening in a slow train, and we went home from the station on foot."

During the two days following the 22nd, I several times changed the place of my abode, as information came to me from all sides that the authorities were eager to catch me, and were

making energetic search. I still wanted to remain in St. Petersburg, in the hope that the workmen would in some way obtain arms, and that there might be an insurrection. There was more than sufficient evidence that the whole population of the city, except the most immediate servants of the Tsar, were not only ripe for revolt, but were burning with a passionate desire to overthrow the auto-bureaucratic system. The few facts already related of the many which I witnessed, or was informed of by witnesses, about the action of the authorities in St. Petersburg during these terrible days prove sufficiently that the people had done everything in their power to give effect to this desire. That is why I thought a rising possible; and, naturally, I considered it my duty to stand in front of any movement of the kind. I had organized and led the people for a peaceful, unarmed demonstration, and therefore I thought that it was doubly my duty to lead them also in the only way of hope that now remained open.

But all the sympathizers and friends who hid me during these two days, and especially the great writer already mentioned, were perfectly convinced, and exerted themselves to convince me, that for the moment there was no hope of open resistance, and that the best thing I could do for the sake of the future of my people was to leave

the capital in order to avoid arrest, which would be as fatal for them as for me.

"You are needed now for the Revolution, for when the time of the people's vengeance comes. Go away while we prepare the means of resistance." I still felt undecided, and wished at least to stay for a time to see if the position cleared up. However, the evening of the 24th put an end to all my hesitation. On that day General Trepoff, who, as I have said, always looked very unfavourably on me, and whom I knew to be a despot of the most cruel and unswerving character, was installed in the Winter Palace and made Dictator of St. Petersburg.

It was thus clear that the Government was resolved to pursue the road of relentless repression, and that the wholesale murder of the last few days had only been an opening chapter of their policy. On the night of the 24th all the members of the Liberal deputation which went at my request to Prince Sviatopolk-Mirski and to M. Witte—Maxim Gorky, the barrister Hessen, the famous historian Karayev, the political writer Peshekonov, Professor Myakotin, Semevsky the historian, Kedrin, a member of the city council—and two others, Pissarev, one of the editors of the Liberal Review *Russian Wealth*, and Sitnikov, a barrister, were arrested and thrown into the fortress. At the same time wholesale arrests began all over the

capital; and I learnt that all my best workmen who by good fortune had escaped death had been thrown into prison.

Direct communication between myself and the body of the members of the association was thus made impossible for the time being. I anxiously endeavoured to obtain information as to the possibility of armed action from the friends, progressive and revolutionary, who were so kindly harbouring me. But every new report was more gloomy than the last. The committee formed at the Free Economic Society had not been able to do anything. It became quite evident that for the moment, though the spirit of revolt in the population was higher than ever before, there was no channel through which it could effectually reveal itself. "You see now," my sympathetic host said, "that to attempt anything at present would only be to throw away your life uselessly, perhaps to bring trouble upon us also. Leave the capital, and we will keep up communication with you."

I thought that to resist further would be foolish, and so I unwillingly consented.

But where should I go? Some of my new friends suggested a certain place in Finland, others different places in the country near St. Petersburg. But messengers brought us the information that spies were roving everywhere, that

the passport examination was being rigidly carried out, and that the police were searching for me on all sides.

At last we chose a hiding-place, and worked out the details of the necessary journey. The Liberal barrister who had helped me so devotedly gave me his own passport, which I promised to return as soon as I was safe.

# CHAPTER XX

## I BEGIN MY ESCAPE

I AGAIN changed my appearance, putting on pince-nez and a new suit, with a showy overcoat. Early on the morning of January 25 I left my last home, being accompanied by a lady a part of the way to the station. I had in my pocket a good revolver, with which I was resolved to defend myself if necessary. It had been arranged that a gentleman should be at the Tsarskoye Selo railway station, and should take a ticket, which he would hand over to me without observation; while a second friend would be there and would watch the railway officials, and warn me if there was anything suspicious.

When I alighted from the sledge, I found the station filled with gendarmes and detectives in plain clothes, who peered into the faces of the passengers. Some of them looked directly into my face. But it was now hardly possible to recognize the bearded priest whom they had known. Several gendarmes of a higher rank

were moving to and fro, as though hunting for some one. I thought the best chance of getting through would be to assume complete quietness. I stopped a gendarme officer, and asked him for a match to light my cigarette. He gave it me; and, having thanked him, I proceeded to walk up and down the platform, twisting my moustache dandy-fashion, and looking anything but what I was. I soon noticed my friend, who, passing me, quickly put the ticket into my hand.

No sooner did my train come in than two gendarmes and a police-spy took up their positions at the doorway, and proceeded to take stock of the entering passengers. I safely passed by them, and seated myself in a second-class carriage. The train started; so far all was well. My friend travelled in the next compartment; and thus, apparently unknown to each other, we went together for some distance. As soon as a certain station was reached we left the train. My friend again took tickets, giving me one in the same furtive manner, and we started off in a quite different direction. This operation we repeated no less than four times. At last, late at night, we reached our destination, having passed the whole day making a zigzag journey; but in point of fact we were still quite near St. Petersburg. Though it was late, my friend at once started back for the capital.

I had now to take horses, and drive to an estate situated in the midst of a large forest, where stood the house that had been offered to me as a refuge. Before leaving, friends had given me a number of things that might be useful, so I was not without luggage. I called at a house near the station that was indicated to me, and asked for a sledge and horses. As usual, the host asked who I was, and whither I was going. When I replied that I wanted to buy V——'s estate, his face at once brightened. He began to rain information upon me; and I had solemnly to enter endless details in my note-book about the crops, the markets, and so on. At last I was able to start. Cold and tired, I reached the end of the drive in the middle of the night.

This proved to be a two-storied house, and my good host made me comfortable on the upper floor; and I found that from the balcony at the back a long ladder gave immediate access to the ground, in case we were suddenly troubled with undesirable visitors. Next day my host drove me in a sledge through the forest, so that I might know the roads in case of necessity; and everything was prepared against the possibility of my retreat being discovered.

Before leaving St. Petersburg, it had been arranged that two passports should be sent to me, one for the interior and one for abroad, the latter

to be used in the event of the chance of insurrection disappearing altogether. Day after day passed, however, and no news reached me in my solitude. Thus I lived through a week of agony, practising running on snow-shoes during the day, and during the sleepless hours of night being tormented with memories of the past week, and with thoughts of what might be going on around my old home. I could not understand why I heard nothing from my friends. Was it possible that all these courageous men and women had been driven into silence again by the ruthless use of brute force? Could it be that Russia had failed to respond to an act which is nearly unique in the annals of human ferocity? Alas! I soon learned that the response had come from the generous heart of my countrymen, but also that the forces of oppression were still irresistible.

After seven days of my stay in the forest, a messenger suddenly appeared from St. Petersburg.

"You must fly immediately," he said; "we have reason for thinking that the authorities have got scent of you."

And then he described to me the situation, which appeared so dark that it was decided that I should leave for abroad without even waiting for the passport which was to come next morning. It was true that all Russia was in

a ferment, and that general strikes on a large scale had broken out in the great towns, both of the north and the south. But these strikes could bear only a peaceful character for lack of arms, and I had to choose between a rest and temporary flight. The messenger sketched out my itinerary, and gave me the address of a man who would undertake to smuggle me over the frontier. I was to take the train to Pskoff, and there to book for Warsaw; but on reaching Vilna I was to return to Dvinsk, and thence through Sh—— to the frontier. The train which I had to catch at our neighbouring station was going within a few hours.

A sledge and horses were soon ready. It was pitch dark, and a wild snowstorm was raging. The bitter wind sang wildly through the bare trees of the forest through which we had to pass. In some places the storm piled up snow-heaps on the road, leaving bare and slippery ice at others. The driver could only go slowly, having the greatest difficulty in seeing the road. The wind penetrated, as it seemed, into the very marrow of my bones, and I soon felt stiff with cold. It seemed as though some diabolical spirits were carrying on carnival all around us. Though it was only a few miles' journey, we soon appeared to have been an endless time about it. I shouted to

my man, who was separated from me by only two or three feet, to drive more quickly; but, drowned in the darkness, he made no sign of hearing me. I was becoming more and more impatient, when suddenly the horses stopped, and the driver, leaning towards me, said—

"Barin, we have lost our way."

My spirits, cold enough from the frost, fell still further.

"What shall we do?" I asked, catching the man's arm.

"You wait here, Barin, and I will go and try to find the road."

Probably he was not absent more than ten minutes, but it seemed an eternity. It appeared that we had got a good way off the right road. The driver resumed his seat, struck the horses, which after a struggle managed to move the sledge, and we made a fresh start. The journey now seemed all the longer; but at last we arrived at the station, half frozen, and several hours late. It happened, however, that we were not the only victims of the snowstorm. The railway line had been blocked in many places, and the train delayed; and, after all, I had to wait for some time.

I have said that I had to change at Pskoff; but we had missed the connection. The next train was to leave nearly seven hours later, and

this interval I had to spend as best I could in the station. After a time I was struck by the suspicious conduct of the gendarmes, of whom there is a detachment stationed in every Russian railway station. They seemed to be watching me; and this was the more disconcerting because, according to custom, they might ask me for my passport, and I had none. I should then at once be arrested, even if there were no suspicion of my identity. Handing over my luggage to a porter, and instructing him to book for me, I therefore left the station and walked down into the town, where I got some refreshment, and walked about for a long time. Then I returned to the station, having still two hours and a half to wait.

I entered the second-class waiting-room, lay down, and soon forgot myself in thought; until suddenly, as though under some magnetic influence, I lifted my eyes, and met the fixed glance of a strange man dressed in plain clothes. His sharp eyes and nose, and his whole appearance, reminded me of an intelligent terrier. As he continued to look fixedly at me, I concluded that he must be a spy. Rising and passing quietly near him, I walked into the third-class waiting-room, where I stretched myself on a bench and shut my eyes. After a time, still affecting sleep, I half opened my eyes and found

him sitting opposite and steadily regarding me. This began to appear alarming, especially as, a moment later, a gendarme entered the room, and the man shook hands with him. Still, I was not interfered with. Perhaps they did not want to arrest me now, thinking that they could do so at the next important station, and so see whether I had not some companions. And this idea was confirmed when I looked about for my porter, and found the foxy-faced detective standing with him, examining my tickets.

For the second time I walked through a ring of gendarmes and detectives into the train. As I passed I heard one of them ask in a murmur—

"Is it he?"

And the other answered, "Yes."

I took my place, and the train started. So I was still free. But I thought it certain that the detective would telegraph to Warsaw or Vilna, or some intermediate station, that I should be watched, and arrested at the right moment. I decided, therefore, to leave the train before such a possibility could arise. For some time this was not to be thought of, as there were several other passengers in my carriage. One by one, however, my neighbours left, and I took out my map and found

our whereabouts. It was very difficult to decide where to alight, but at last I determined to get out at the station S——, before reaching the small town of Sh——, and to try my luck.

# CHAPTER XXI

### A RIDE FOR FREEDOM

Before we reached this point, a railway workman entered my compartment. We were quite alone. He had the simple, honest face of that class of workmen who had always held my trust and sympathy, Asked where he was going, he replied, "To S——."

"Oh, and I also," I replied, with satisfaction. "I am going there on serious business —in fact, a marriage business. But I do not know at what house to stop. Could you advise me?"

My companion answered that he was a native, and could find every house in the place blindfold. I then explained to him at some length my embarrassment, how I wanted to come to my prospective bride unexpectedly, to see for myself if everything was really as it had been described to me.

"There will be acquaintances of mine in the station. Could we not get out by a back way

without being noticed? Then you might take me to an inn."

He at first invited me to his own house; but then, remembering that too many people were sleeping there, said he would take me to a little inn near by. I promised him half a rouble for this service and for carrying my baggage, and with this he was evidently pleased. When we reached the station he took my portmanteau, and we plunged at once into the dark street. Changing his mind, he took me to the house of a Pole—"a good man," he said, "who has a very good wife."

She proved, indeed, most hospitable, and soon afterwards her husband returned home. We sat talking for a long time, though it was one o'clock in the morning when I arrived; and the more we talked, the more I liked these simple people. I inquired about all sorts of things; and at last, touching upon the subject of Poland, expressed my deep sympathy with that unhappy country and the undeserved suffering of its people. My host's eyes glowed.

"I see you love your people and your country," I added. "What would you do if you were asked to save a man who had been trying, not by words but by deeds, to help the people of Russia, and to work for the emancipation of all its subject peoples?"

"I would do everything," he answered, "and with delight."

"Well," I said, "I am such a man. The detectives are at my heels. I must go over the frontier, and leave the country for a time. Yet I cannot go to the station. The only way is to drive to the town of N——. Is it far?"

"About two hundred versts" (one hundred and thirty-four miles).

"Would you undertake to get me there?"

"With pleasure. Wherever you like."

Early in the morning he took me to a Jew to hire a sledge and horses. It was bitterly cold weather, and the snow was again falling as we started on our journey. February weather is, indeed, in Russia generally the severest of the year. My overcoat was very fine to look at, but did not keep me warm; and so the Pole gave me a *burka*, a kind of cloak used on rough journeys. Even then I felt the cold very much. There were mostly no regular roads, and we more than once took the wrong direction. Reaching the next village with difficulty, we had a short rest and hired new horses. There a peasant took the place of the Jew, leaving him to return home. In this way we drove from village to village day and night, choosing so far as possible small hamlets, and having for food only bread, sausages, and some vodka.

At one village we called at a *korchma* (inn) and sat down to warm ourselves and get some food. Hardly had we commenced our meal when the door opened, and a gendarme entered. He looked at us with suspicion, but said nothing. This prompted us to hurry, and I made an extra payment to obtain a fast horse. At the next inn we stopped to rest the horse, as I intended to take it farther. The landlord, a Jew, looked at me attentively, and said—

"I understand. But this is not the driver you need. You had better take him as far as the village K——, and dismiss him there; and I will give you an address where you can arrange everything that is necessary." Without doubt he guessed that I was escaping across the frontier. His solicitude touched me, and I gratefully offered him several roubles. But these he indignantly refused, saying, "It is not a question of money."

We safely reached the little town of K——, and called at the address which had been given us. I then dismissed the driver, and had a hearty meal with my friend the Pole, who was still accompanying me. Our host was again a Jew, and we were served by his two young daughters, who, as well as their father, evidently understood the state of the case, and tried to show their sympathy. By this time the storm, which had

lasted for two days, ceased, and the weather brightened. The roast duck which they gave us, the warm room, and the kindness which these good people showed, were a welcome change after the rough journey of nearly three days which we had made. The father soon brought in our new driver, a middle-aged man with a strong and intelligent face.

As we were making our arrangements a gendarme appeared. My host scratched his head, and murmured, "The devil! But do not be afraid; he is only after his three roubles." The gendarme joined us, I offered him a cigarette, and we all four fell into a friendly conversation. After a time my host took the gendarme aside, said a few words, and handed something to him. The man's face brightened, and after a few friendly remarks he shook hands, and saying, "I am honoured with our acquaintance, and wish you every success," he left. My host explained that in this village there were no less than eight gendarmes, all of whom were in conspiracy with the local smugglers. For every person who passed through the village on his way to the frontier they received three roubles, which they divided amongst them. Altogether it brought them in a very nice regular income, thanks to which none of them was ever perfectly sober.

Our horses were brought, and presently it

turned out that, though we had an excellent driver, he was nevertheless a great drunkard. At every *monopolka* (State drink-shop) he insisted on stopping and imbibing freely. Before starting, our host had given us a detailed route, indicating which villages we should avoid because of the police, where we should stop, and so on. Through this woody and mountainous region we drove all night, having several times in the darkness to take peasants with us to show us the road. Next day—after four days and nights of almost incessant driving in the frost—we reached a village situated only a few versts from the frontier, where my friend the Pole had to leave me. We separated with a brotherly embrace, and I then found out the person to whom I had been directed by my friends in St. Petersburg, and who was to smuggle me over the frontier. He turned out to be an extremely cautious man. I spent a few hours with him in his house, but he took me to a neighbour's to spend the night. I left my luggage with him, and it was arranged that it should be taken over the frontier afterwards, and delivered to me if I got across safely.

On the following day I dressed in peasant's clothes, and drove with the smuggler's family to the little village of T——, adjoining the frontier. It was a Sunday, and they went to the village

church, leaving me to rest in one of the houses of the village. This came near to being the last day of my life. The intense cold in mid-winter in Russia leads the peasants to hermetically seal their rooms, cementing the double windows, and closing up every possible orifice. I lay down to sleep, grateful for the heat of the stove; and when, two hours later, the smuggler with his two brothers and father-in-law came from the church to fetch me, they found me in a condition bordering on unconsciousness. They at once opened the folding panes in the windows, and then carried me into the courtyard, where I soon recovered.

The five of us took our places in the sledge, and drove to a house situated close to the frontier line. There I was handed over to a young Pole, who, unfortunately, was not very trustworthy, as it appeared later on; and he went out to see the soldier on duty in order to warn him of my passing.

# CHAPTER XXII

## I JUMP THE FRONTIER

I MUST explain that, all along the West Russian frontier, a considerable part of the population are professional smugglers, who undertake to get persons, as well as goods, through by making arrangements with the guards on duty. In the evening the persons desiring to get through are assembled, singly or in a company, according to the circumstances, and the guard is paid so much, usually from one to three roubles, for each person. The real danger, therefore, lies rather with the detectives in the neighbouring villages, and also in the fact that sometimes the guards are unexpectedly changed; and then, no arrangements having been made, they carry out their duty and fire upon any illegal wayfarer. It sometimes happens, also, that a special officer is sent from St. Petersburg because of information that has been received; and then everything is thrown topsy-turvy.

In former years, the contingent of persons

smuggled over consisted mainly of peasants or workmen, Jews, Poles, Lithuanians, and others, driven to despair by all sorts of disabilities, and longing to find a refuge in the free world, generally in America. To get a passport means for them to spend much of their little money on passport-taxes and on bribes, without which no official service is performed—often more than a score of roubles. As these poor creatures cannot afford such expense, they prefer the cheaper way, riskier though it be, of "jumping" the frontier. In recent years, however, a larger and larger proportion of those secretly leaving the country consists of political refugees, or young men evading military service and deserting reservists. These cannot get a regular passport in any way. A few of them manage to obtain irregular passports; the others usually pay a high price to the smugglers, who, if they were caught in the act, would be imprisoned and subjected to severe punishment, their families being ruined. This is why they undertake such business only when they are well paid, or when they are themselves practically in the revolutionary camp and live at the frontier to carry out this service. The smuggling of goods, including revolutionary literature, is carried on in the same way. It is a very dangerous occupation, and is paid accordingly. For instance, to smuggle into the Empire

a *poud* (thirty-six pounds) of prohibited literature costs at the least five guineas, and in many cases ten guineas, or even more. If one remembers how often these bales of literature are seized, or have to be thrown into the rivers or otherwise abandoned by the smugglers, one can easily imagine what a strain the supply, which is in ever-increasing demand, puts upon the resources of the revolutionary parties.

My guide did not return for a long time. It appeared that he had been drinking with the soldier, and that the operation pleased them both so much that it had to be repeated; and when at last he returned he was absolutely tipsy and incapable of doing anything. I understood from the reproaches of the family that he had spent all the money I gave him for the business. The fellow curled himself up in a corner and went fast asleep. When, after some hours, he woke up and came to his senses, he found that the guard had been changed. This news greatly alarmed his family, who felt their duty toward me. But there was no way out of the difficulty except to pass the night where I was.

Early next morning my guide, sober now, woke me up, and told me to follow him. We took with us a young boy, about twelve years of age. After a few minutes' walking my guide met a colleague, who said it was impossible now

to cross, because there were two soldiers, both strangers, at the frontier post. However, I insisted on going forward. It was very misty, and only about a hundred yards lay between us and the barbed wire which separates Russian territory from Prussia.

I was now in the hands of the small boy. We began to run from one to another of the outlying buildings of the village, hiding behind each as we went. I saw that the business had not been arranged properly, and got my revolver in readiness.

Suddenly the boy caught my arm, and in startled tones cried, "A soldier is behind us!"

Then I heard a shout, "Stop!" I looked behind and saw a soldier about forty yards away, running towards us across the deep snow. We now began to run as fast as we could. But the soldier was overtaking us.

When he was only a few yards away, he stumbled, and fell at full length. Never was a more fortunate accident.

A moment later we were crawling under the barbed wire, and, for the first time in my life, I stood outside my native land. I expected a rifle-shot, but none came; and we pursued our way. This seemed very strange to me until, later on, I learned that, a month before, a man had been shot by a Russian soldier when on the

other side of the frontier, that the Prussian guards reported the incident to their authorities, and that it gave rise to serious complications, and led to the Russian guards receiving stricter instructions.

Meanwhile we were running in zigzags towards a house which was to be seen in the distance. When I felt comparatively in safety, I asked my little conductor whether he was frightened.

"I frightened of a soldier? Never!" he replied, with a rare show of anger.

The house was that of a German, whom we found hospitably disposed. Here, again, I asked for another suit of clothes, in exchange for which I left my own. A pair of horses was brought; and the woman of the house took her place in the sledge with myself and the boy, and left us at the next inn, a distance of about half a mile.

It was here that my smuggler had to bring my luggage, but he had not yet come. At last I breathed freely; and after getting some food, I kissed the boy good-bye, giving him a five-rouble note, which he carefully hid in the lining of his coat. After some consideration, I decided to wait for my portmanteau.

A couple of hours later, a stout man, with an arrogant demeanour, came into the inn and approached me, beginning to put questions to me in Russian. "Where are you going?" and

"How are things in St. Petersburg?" he asked. I told him I did not know anything about St. Petersburg. But he again, more pointedly, asked who I was, and I replied that I was a deserter.

"Ah," he said, "I will bring some of your countrymen, who would be pleased to see you;" and forthwith he left the inn. The innkeeper beckoned me with her finger, and whispered, "He is an agent of the Russian Police. You had better leave at once." She then called the driver to fetch the horses; but before she had returned the stout man came back, this time with two others. I had been warned that Germany was extraditing deserters, but I had let the word slip out thoughtlessly. It was clear that I must get away at once.

I saw through the window that the horses were being harnessed. The woman who kept the inn came in, and engaged the stout man in conversation. Suddenly she said to him, "I forgot to give you a message;" and, with a significant nod to me, she took him into the next room. Pretending to follow them, I went to the door, jumped into the sledge, and we made off at full speed. Looking backward, I saw the stout man rush out of the inn. But there were no other horses, and we were soon out of sight, making fast toward the town of Tilsit.

The journey passed without further incident.

On my arrival, I took the first opportunity of getting shaved; and, after that, my driver left me at the house of a young man to whom I had been commended by my friends in St. Petersburg. All over his rooms I found heaps of Russian revolutionary publications. My curiosity was highly excited; but my new host did not know a word of Russian, which is the only language I speak. At last he brought a friend who spoke Russian, a very sympathetic fellow, N——; and I soon saw that I was in a hot-bed of revolutionary activity. People came and went, packing parcels of clandestine literature, and carrying them away.

I wondered how much my host knew about me, and what he thought of the recent events, towards which I therefore turned the conversation. He showed the utmost interest, and spoke with great sympathy of Father Gapon. I decided to trust myself to him, and, under promise of preserving the secret, told him who I was. He was quite startled, and began to question me, evidently rather doubting the truth of what I had said. Convinced at last, he said that he and N—— were both members of the Lettish Social Democratic League.

They gave me a passport; and presently N—— accompanied me to Berlin, whence I intended to go on to Switzerland, as I was afraid

that in Germany I should not be safe from arrest and extradition.

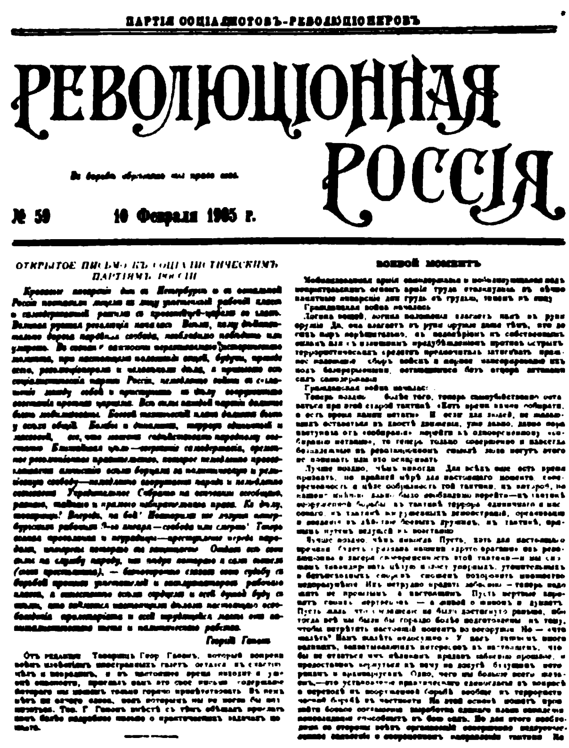
After staying one night in Berlin, N—— booked for me; and in twenty-four hours I was a free man in a free country.

# CHAPTER XXIII

## THE PROSPECTS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

I VISITED in turn Switzerland, Paris, London. Everywhere I found an atmosphere of liberty, allowing the peaceful development of the mass of the people, and making impossible any such events as those in which I had taken part during the last few weeks. I was living now in a new world, but only in order to work for the transformation of the old world which I had left behind. Twice I had escaped from death—the first time from the bullets of the soldiers at the Narva Gate; the second time by evading an arrest which would have certainly finished cruelly for me in the dungeons of St. Peter and St. Paul, or Schlüsselburg. But I felt now more than ever that my life belonged to my people, and that I must devote all my energies to preparing for the moment when I should be able to return to my workmen, and lead them with certainty on the path toward liberty and welfare.

Several months have passed, bringing this day nearer. The massacres of January were a revelation which brought about a complete change in the mind of the nation. This act of the Tsar's Government proved to be a finishing stroke to the many years of educational work which had been carried on at so much sacrifice by the revolutionary parties, by the many years of misrule and its sequel of misery and suffering, and last, but not least, by the criminal and senseless war, which was as much hated by the whole people as it was harmful to them. The despotism of the last century has made famine a national institution among us; it has brought the State finances to the verge of bankruptcy; it has destroyed the very foundation of peasant agriculture; it has ruined thousands upon thousands of the best lives of our youth. At the moment when the whole nation was clamouring for a change of policy, for a respite, at least, from the baneful oppression to which it had been so long subjected, at this moment the paternal Government of the Tsar had found nothing better to do than to waste millions on the building of railways, fortresses, and war-ships in foreign lands, and then to begin a war which was unprecedented, as well by its military disasters as the degree of corruption and incapacity it revealed.



ПАРТІЯ СОЦІАЛИСТОВЪ-РЕВОЛЮЦІОНЕРОВЪ

# РЕВОЛЮЦІОННАЯ РОССІЯ

*Въ борьбѣ обрѣтешь ты право свое.*

№ 59 10 Февраля 1905 г.

ОТКРЫТОЕ ПИСЬМО КЪ СОЦІАЛИСТИЧЕСКИМЪ ПАРТІЯМЪ РОССІИ

Георгій Гапонъ

БОЕВОЙ МОМЕНТЪ

PAGE OF "REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA," THE ORGAN OF THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST PARTY, CONTAINING A MANIFESTO BY FATHER GAPON (FEBRUARY, 10, 1905).

[*To face p.* 248.

I say that the events of January 22 were the finishing stroke by which the true meaning of these things was brought home to the minds of the people. It was a definite and irrevocable lesson, as everything that has followed proves beyond doubt. With unexampled solidarity, one town after another responded to the shouts of horror of the workmen of the capital, and struck work or the performance of their professional duties—teachers, barristers, journalists, as well as skilled and unskilled labourers, beginning with Moscow and Riga, and rolling southward to the industrial regions of the west, the steppes of the Black Sea, and even into the mountains of the Caucasus.

To appreciate rightly this movement, one must take into account the amount of suffering which such strikes entail. Remember that the immense majority of Russian workmen have no savings, that they live from hand to mouth, and rarely have clothing or furniture that can be pawned or sold. These strikes have often lasted for weeks, and even months, amid the cries of famished children and the sobs of heart-broken mothers. Soon the peasants joined the revolt. An agrarian war broke out in numerous districts, especially in the Baltic and Central provinces, around Odessa, and in the Caucasus; and, after being extinguished with bloodshed in one

place, broke out in another, always more fiercely than before, and on a larger scale. Here, too, the Government has done everything to increase the horrors of the situation. By order of Ministers and of the superior heads of the Orthodox priesthood, the village policeman and priests have incited the peasants against the "intellectuals," the doctors who nursed and the students who helped them in famine years, against those of the landlords who were too good or liberal. In many places, the higher administration of the provinces has organized bands of hooligans, whom we call "black hundreds," who call themselves "Russian men;" and these they have incited to attacks on the educated classes and on all non-Orthodox peoples, especially the Jews and Armenians, telling them that these people have been bought by Japanese or English gold to ruin their country. As a result, many of the landlords have fled from their domains into the towns; and, not finding safety even there, they too have been forced to procure arms for themselves, and to organize secret defence committees.

This agrarian crisis is one of the reasons why the Zemstvo movement has gained so much strength, and why many of the more liberal nobles have taken a bolder part in it. The Jews, Poles, and Armenians have shown still

greater energy. The wholesale massacre of these unhappy races is arranged by the Government in a systematic, almost a scientific, way. The massacres of the Armenians in Baku, Batoum, Tiflis, and other towns, to which I have referred; the massacres of Jews, reports of which we receive almost daily now; the wholesale slaughter of Poles and Jews in Lodz, where the people actually rose in open insurrection;—these crimes have established already a sporadic civil war throughout the length of Russia.

And yet this is only the beginning. Forcing every class of the Russian nation and every race inhabiting the country to train themselves for military resistance, and making a question of life and death of it, the Government has done its best to produce a revolution before which the great French Revolution will appear as a game of Lilliputians. For what have the Tsar and the bureaucracy done to alleviate the horrors of the crisis? Absolutely nothing. Every decree of reform that has been issued has been at once spoiled by some trick, and always by the fact that its realization was confided to the same agents whose crimes are crying to Heaven for vengeance. Thus the Tsar granted in February last a decree of religious toleration. But this does not permit freedom of religious discussion; it does not touch at all six millions

of Jews and many millions of Mohammedans and other non-Christian peoples; and such partial freedom as is granted to the Christian creeds was, in numberless cases, reduced to a dead letter by the local officials not having received instructions. Who, indeed, could force them to apply the decree, when all publicity was forbidden? Again, the Elective Assembly which the Tsar granted in August was a shameless mockery of real Parliamentary institutions, as well as of the national demand for constitutional government. It did not confide to the people any rights at all, and left the Assembly to be constructed in such a way as to form a new weapon to strengthen the Throne and the bureaucracy.

And now, as I write, the news reaches me that the crops have failed in the larger half of the Empire through the lack of labour and cultivation, and that vast tracts of the country are threatened with famine. Who will come to the help of the twenty millions of peasants who are already beginning to starve in many districts? And whence can the salvation of my people come, if the nation will not rise, armed as best it may, and determined to chase away the blasphemous Tsar and his satraps, at any price of blood it may cost?

Fortunately, this price may be less than might be expected some time ago. There are already numerous signs that the forces of the Government

are getting more and more sick of the task of killing their brethren. The mutiny of the *Kniaz Potemkin* and the *Georgey Pobyedonostsets* (what an irony of fate for the Procurator of the Holy Synod!), of the *Pruth* and the destroyers, and practically, though perhaps less openly, of the whole of the fleet, has already deprived the Tsar of one mighty arm; and now every day there are more and more numerous signs that the second and still more formidable weapon, the army, is beginning to yield to the atmosphere of revolt by which it is enveloped. If not in the towns, at least in the villages, the soldiers fraternize with the people; and in this way the agrarian war of which I have spoken will have a fatal influence on them. It is, of course, impossible to expect that the general outbreak will wait till the whole army mutinies. It is an elemental force which gets stronger the more often it is repressed, and grows in its very exercise. The only thing that the leaders of the revolutionary movement can do is to organize this elemental force so as to deal the blow more quickly, to make the duration of the struggle shorter, to avoid innocent bloodshed, to achieve an effect as decisive and as favourable to the masses as circumstances permit.

It is to these ends that I have directed my activity since I left Russia.

Before I end my story I may be asked how long this contest may continue, and what are the chances of the classes in which I am most interested—the workmen and the peasants. If the Tsar would promptly display some wisdom, of which during his reign there has as yet been no sign, and if, instead of vague promises, undefined and unguaranteed, he would immediately grant the Russian people the fullest freedom to work out their own destinies, the dynasty might possibly be saved to enjoy the position of a limited monarchy. But what reason have we to hope for such a manly and intelligent act on the part of the Tsar? He has never hitherto succeeded in getting free from the influence of Pobyedonostseff, and such ruthless oppressors as Plehve and Trepoff. There is, in fact, none, because such an act would mean not only the limitation of the autocracy; its sequel in publicity and Parliamentary control would inevitably put an end to the career of the official criminals under whom we are now suffering. Against such a course the bureaucrats will find pretexts, even if the Tsar were personally inclined for it.

There might be another possibility. If the Tsar would not give by one decisive act full political freedom to all his subjects, he might discriminate and devolve a part of his power upon the upper classes on condition of receiving an

indemnity for himself and his former servants; and he might differentiate between the various classes by a skilful gradation of rights and privileges. By such measures, as well as by real agrarian reforms, by the lessening of taxation that falls upon the peasants, by lowering the protectionist tariff, and by reforming the whole administration, he might weaken very much the forces of the Opposition. In this way the support of the upper and middle classes might be won, and, for a time, the bitterness of the peasants softened. But even so, the revolution would be only adjourned for a few years. It would be in no way destroyed, because the chief support of the revolutionary movement lies in the industrial classes, who would go on agitating with as much energy as ever. The agrarian reforms would soon prove hollow, because a Parliament composed mainly of landlords and merchants would frustrate any real attempt in this direction. Apart from this consideration, such a policy would require a mature sense of statesmanship, real courage, and skill. The so-called Constitution which the Tsar promised on August 19, and again on October 30, shows no traces of these qualities.

I may say, therefore, with certainty, that the struggle is quickly approaching its inevitable climax; that Nicholas II. is preparing for himself the fate which befell a certain English King and

a certain French King long ago, and that such members of his dynasty as escape unhurt from the throes of the revolution may, on some day in the not very distant future, find themselves exiles upon some Western shore.

# APPENDIX

## THE ST. PETERSBURG WORKMEN'S PETITION TO THE TSAR, JANUARY 22, 1905.

SIRE,—

We working men of St. Petersburg, our wives and children, and our parents, helpless, aged men and women, have come to you, O Tsar, in quest of justice and protection. We have been beggared, oppressed, over-burdened with excessive toil, treated with contumely. We are not recognized as normal human beings, but are dealt with as slaves who have to bear their bitter lot in silence. Patiently we endured this; but now we are being thrust deeper into the slough of rightlessness and ignorance, are being suffocated by despotism and arbitrary whims, and now, O Tsar, we have no strength left. The awful moment has come when death is better than the prolongation of our unendurable tortures. Therefore, we have left work, and informed our employers that we shall not resume it until they have fulfilled our demands. What we have asked is little, consisting solely of that without which our life is not life, but hell and eternal torture.

Our first petition was that our employers should investigate our needs together with ourselves, and even that has been refused. The very right of

discussing our wants has been withheld from us on the ground that the law does not recognize any such right, and our demand for an eight-hours day has been dismissed as illegal. To fix the prices of our labour in concert with ourselves, to adjudge upon misunderstandings between us and the lower administration of the factories, to raise the wages of unskilled work men and women up to a rouble a day, to abolish overtime, to take better care of the sick, to instruct without insulting us, to arrange the workshops so that we might work there without encountering death through draughts, rain, and snow: all these requests have been condemned by our employers as unlawful, and our very petition treated as a crime, while the wish to better our condition is regarded as a piece of insolence towards the employers.

O Emperor, there are more than three hundred thousand of us here, yet we are all of us human beings only in appearance and outwardly, while in reality we are deemed devoid of a single human right, even that of speaking, thinking, and meeting to talk over our needs, and of taking measures to better our condition. Any one of us who should dare lift his voice in defence of the working class is thrown into prison or banished. The possession of a kindly heart, of a sensitive soul, is punished in us as a crime. Fellow-feeling for a forlorn, maltreated human being who is bereft of his rights is consequently a heinous crime. O Tsar, is this in accordance with God's commandments, in virtue of which you are now reigning? Is life under such laws worth living? Would it not be better for all of us working people in Russia to die,

leaving capitalists and officials to live and enjoy existence?

Such is the future which confronts us, Sire, and therefore we are gathered together before your palace walls. Here we await the last available means of rescue. Refuse not to help your people out of the gulf of rightlessness, misery, and ignorance. Give them a chance of accomplishing their destiny. Deliver them from the intolerable oppression of the bureaucracy. Demolish the wall between yourself and the people, and let them govern the country in conjunction with yourself. You have been sent to lead the people to happiness; but happiness is snatched from us by the officials, who leave us only sorrow and humiliation. Consider our demands attentively and without anger. They have been uttered not for evil, but for good; for our good, Sire, and yours. It is not insolence that speaks in us, but the consciousness of the general necessity of escaping from the present intolerable state of things. Russia is too vast, her wants too manifold, to admit of bureaucrats alone governing her. It is absolutely necessary that the people should assist, because only they know their own hardships.

Refuse not to succour your people; give orders without delay to representatives of all classes in the land to meet together. Let capitalists and workmen be present; let officials, priests, physicians, and teachers all come and choose their own delegates. Let all be free to elect whom they will, and for this purpose let the elections to the Constituent Assembly be organized on the principle of universal suffrage. This is our principal

request, on which everything else depends. It is the best and only plaster for our open wounds, without which they will ever remain open and hurry us on to death. There is no one panacea for all our ills; many are needed, and we now proceed to enumerate them, speaking plainly and candidly to you, Sire, as to a father. The following measures are indispensable.

In the first section are those which are directed against the ignorance and disfranchisement of the Russian people. They include—

(1) Freedom and inviolability of the person, liberty of speech, of the press, of association, of conscience in matters of religion, and separation of Church and State.

(2) General and obligatory education by the State.

(3) The responsibility of Ministers to the nation, and guarantees for the legality of administrative methods.

(4) Equality of all persons, without exception, before the law.

(5) The immediate recall of all who have suffered for their convictions.

In the second section are measures against the poverty of the nation.

(1) The repeal of indirect taxation, and the substitution of a direct progressive income-tax.

(2) Repeal of the land redemption tax. Cheap credit, and a gradual transfer of the land to the people.

The third section comprises measures against the crushing of labour by capital.

(1) Protection of labour by the law.